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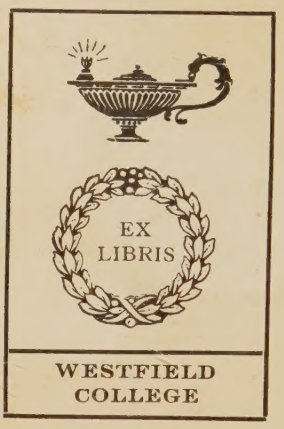

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CARLYLE
HIS RISE AND FALL

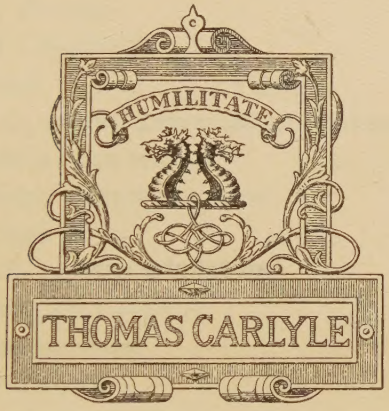
CARLYLE

HIS RISE AND FALL

BY

NORWOOD YOUNG

Author of "The Life of Frederick the Great"



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The design on the title-page is a reproduction of Carlyle's book-plate.

CARLYLE: HIS RISE AND FALL

PREFACE

MORE than a hundred years have elapsed since Carlyle's first book was published, the *Life of Schiller*, in 1825 ; more than sixty years since his last work was completed, the *Life of Frederick the Great*, in 1865. Yet his words are still quoted in speeches, books, and newspaper articles, even in advertisements ; and instalments of his letters, and those of his wife, continue to appear, though twenty volumes of them have already been printed and an additional large quantity in magazines, and in the biographies and memoirs of his contemporaries. His personal character, and his public influence, are still subjects of speculation and dispute.

His works are worthy of attention because he exercised an influence upon his contemporaries the effects of which we have inherited ; and because he dealt with great, permanent problems, and also with some of the practical questions which we are still endeavouring to solve.

He spoke of life and death, the beginning and the end ; he pondered over the past, the present, and the future, and their essential unity. Whatever our views may be, we are made to reflect upon the mysteries of this wonderful world, upon what Carlyle called "natural super-naturalism."

He was a sponsor of German literature. Where stand Schiller and Goethe to-day ? Are we to pass them by because Germany has been defeated in war ? And the military State, with a Hohenzollern at the head, where is it now ? Carlyle thought it the ideal form of Government. In this connection we have to consider the events which

led to the war of 1914–1918, and to what extent Carlyle shares the responsibility for that occurrence.

The French Revolution, again, what were the real causes of that conflagration? May we expect that Bolshevism will end as Jacobinism did?

Hero-worship, under the form of Eugenics, is very much with us. Has there been human progress? If so, has it been wholly, or chiefly, the work of gifted individuals?

The position of labour is one of the great questions of our time. Carlyle's proposals, visionary as they were, bring the eternal facts before us.

Opinions have differed about him as of few men. Even his power of literary expression, which would seem to be sufficiently patent, has been denied. There are critics who declare that his style is merely disagreeable.

With regard to his influence, every possible divergence of comment has been expressed. The admirers who have endeavoured to instruct the world about him assert that he was one of the great figures of all time, that much of the best thought and feeling of our day is traceable to his influence, that he was not only a supreme Artist, but also a Seer and a Prophet.

On the other hand, we have statements of a very different tenor, from other men of note, who were among his contemporaries. Some examples may be cited. Henry James said that Carlyle was an "inveterate comedian," who had "no conception of human brotherhood," and "an intellectual incapacity to esteem truth for its own sake." Sir Henry Taylor told Carlyle himself that he "did not know the difference between right and wrong." Jowett declared that Carlyle was "totally regardless of truth" and that, "while talking about shams, he was himself the greatest of shams." The *Quarterly Review* spoke of his "baneful influence" and said of his works that their "all-pervading tone, spirit, and tendency are all wrong"; the *Edinburgh Review* was "astonished at the exaggerated estimate" that had been formed of him; in *Blackwood's Magazine* he was denounced as a "blatant impostor." Much more of the same sort could be quoted, from

respectable sources, both contemporary and of our own day.

These discrepancies are due, in some measure, to the contradictions, the exaggerations, and the symbolism in which Carlyle indulged. Hence there is a wide latitude of interpretation. Admirers find the meanings that they desire; while the detractors fasten relentlessly upon the actual words and persist in taking them literally.

I am much indebted to Miss Froude, daughter of J. A. Froude, for the valuable assistance she has given me. I thank her most heartily.

Mr. Charles Whibley has given me the benefit of his criticism and advice.

For leave to quote from Froude's publications about Carlyle, I desire to express my grateful acknowledgments to Miss Froude and to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co.

Mr. John Murray and Dr. Leonard Huxley have kindly given me permission to quote from the letters written by Mrs. Carlyle to her cousin Jeannie Welsh.

Mr. Alexander Carlyle, the nephew of Carlyle, has given me permission to quote from any of Carlyle's, or Mrs. Carlyle's, letters or writings, of which he owns the copyright.

I have not thought it necessary to give the references to Carlyle's works, or to Froude's publications. Other authorities are mentioned when it seems advisable.

NORWOOD YOUNG.

"How delicate, decent is English Biography, bless its mealy mouth."

—*Carlyle's Essay on Scott*, 1838

CHAPTER I

INHERITANCE

THOMAS CARLYLE was born on the 4th December, 1795, at the village of Ecclefechan, in Dumfries, about six miles from Annan, on the Solway. His father was a stonemason. There was a belief in the family, which he shared, that they were descended from Lord Carlile, in ten generations. The tenth generation contained one thousand and twenty-four persons. Whether there was a Lord Carlile among them is a matter of indifference. It is to be presumed that the other one thousand and twenty-three ancestors were the equals of a Lord Carlile, as transmitters of inheritable qualities. There is no reason to suppose that the blood of a Peer has any greater potency than the blood of a Peasant.

But the belief in a noble ancestry may influence the growth of the character. Carlyle acquired this belief in childhood. In the *Reminiscences*, he says that his grandfather, Thomas Carlyle, used to hunt with the Laird of Bridekirk, who was believed to be descended from Lord Carlile, " partly in the character of kinsman." He says also that his grandfather went to Dumfries in 1745, " by the lady of Bridekirk's request, to look after the Laird, whom, as a Whig of some note, they had taken prisoner." He may have been told this story by the grandfather himself. He thought much of it ; he related it to Queen Victoria on the single occasion when he had a few minutes of conversation with her.

When, after the death of his wife, he came across a letter of hers in which she had made a reference to his humble birth, he appended the note : " Gracie of Dumfries,

a kind of 'genealogist by trade,' had marked long since (of his own accord, not knowing me) my Grandfather to be lineally descended from the 'First Lord Carlile,' and brings us down from the brother of the murdered Duncan. What laughing my Darling and I had when that document arrived."

By lineal descent Carlyle meant descent through the males in each generation, the females being ignored. Such lineal descent from the brother of Duncan is, we may safely say, universal in Great Britain. For every man has two grandfathers, four great-grandfathers, and so on, the number of ancestors doubling in each generation. If we continue the doubling back to the date of Duncan, we obtain a figure, of males only, far in excess of the present population of the whole world, which is many times more than it was then. Yet each man now living must have had that number of "lineal" ancestors. The explanation is that in every pedigree there are a great many duplicates. A duplicate in great-grandfathers would cut out one fourth of the "lineal" ancestors, and one eighth of the total of all ancestors. The blood of Duncan must by this time have spread all over Great Britain. We are all descended from every person living in Scotland in the time of Duncan, whether royal, or plebian. The blood even of those who died without issue is, through their ancestors, in every one of us.

Few men, in spite of their philosophy, and their pose of laughter, are really indifferent to the belief in their noble birth. Carlyle was like the rest of mankind. His character, and his career, were influenced by the proud belief that he came of superior stock.

The growth of the character follows the pressure of external events, which accelerate or retard the expansion of the innate tendencies. What these tendencies may be we are unable to divine. Even the final product escapes our analysis. We are incompetent observers of mental qualities. A man may have one character in his office, another in his club, a third in his home; and even in these different spheres there will be no consensus of opinion about

him. No two men agree with regard to the character of a third man. We have no reliable standard of measurement. We are incapable of classifying character with precision and certainty. Twins may be indistinguishable physically and yet reveal to us no mental similarity. If the studies and experiments upon which so much labour and ability are being expended at the present time, ever succeed in giving us a method by which we can identify twins by mental tests alone—without any previous knowledge of their confraternity, with no assistance from physical appearance or family information—then we have still to separate the inherited mind from the acquired mind, a task which is as yet beyond our powers. A similar mental character in twins may be due either to a similar inheritance or to a similar environment. An experiment which might give valuable results would be to separate twins immediately after birth and place them in radically different surroundings. Then when maturity had been reached to mix them with others of the same age, and try to discover the twins by mental tests. If success was obtained it would be good evidence of the permanence of the inherited mental character.

Except in the most extreme cases—some forms of insanity, for instance—we cannot as yet assess the inherited mental qualities. We do not know what they were in the parents. Of the grandparents there is usually very little information, even as to their adult characters, while of their inherited potentialities, many of which remained dormant, nothing whatever is known.

To understand the growth of Carlyle, how he came to be what he was, we must therefore begin by examining the facts of his earliest days, which influenced him more than he influenced them. We cannot guess what was in his blood, and are obliged to confine ourselves to his surroundings, to his inherited environment.

CHAPTER II

INHERITED ENVIRONMENT

(1) *Parents*

CARLYLE'S grandfather, Thomas, was born in 1722 at Middlebie, near Ecclefechan. At first a carpenter, he became a farmer, at Brownknowe, in the neighbourhood. He married Mary Gillespie, and by her had four sons, John, James, Francis, and Thomas, and two daughters. The eldest daughter Fanny, married William Brown, a mason. Brown taught his brothers-in-law his trade.

John, the eldest of the four sons, born in 1754, married Rachel Paisley. Her brother, Walter Paisley, conveyed to her a piece of land in Ecclefechan. Rachel died soon afterwards. John Carlyle, assisted by his younger brother, James, built a house on the land. The house was divided into two cottages of three rooms each, which were connected by an arch over a passage which gave access to a builder's yard in the rear. John married a second time, taking as his wife, Janet Lockhart. They lived in the left-hand part of the arched house, where they reared two sons and a daughter.

James, the second son, born in August 1758, married in 1791, Janet Carlyle, a distant cousin, whom he brought into the right-hand part of the house. The move of John and James, with their wives, into the house they had erected, was made probably in or before 1791. There James Carlyle's wife bore him a son, John. She died soon afterwards, in 1792. The child was taken care of by his mother's parents.

On the 5th March, 1795, James, now aged thirty-seven,

married Margaret Aitken, aged twenty-four. She was the daughter of a farmer. At that time she was engaged as domestic servant at a farm, Townfoot, near Ecclefechan. Her ancestry has not been explored. She was only a woman, and made no claim to descent from a Peer.

On the 4th December, 1795, their son, Thomas, was born in the arched house. There also was born, 4th August, 1797, another boy, Alexander. In the autumn of the next year, 1798, James moved with his wife and two sons into a larger house in the village, where the other children were born. That house, in which Thomas Carlyle was reared from the age of two, and which was the home of his parents for eighteen years, no longer exists. The arched house remains, and has been made the medium of a memorial to Carlyle.

Of his grandfather Thomas, Carlyle said, in a paper written in 1832 : " The man in honour (the *man*) of those days in that rude border country was a drinker and hunter ; above all, a striker. My grandfather did not drink, but his stroke was ever as ready as his word, and both were sharp enough. He was a fiery man, irascible, indomitable, of the toughness and springiness of steel. An old market-brawl, called ' the Ecclefechan Dog-fight ' in which he was a principal, survives in tradition there to this day."

The sons John, James, Francis, and Thomas, were worthy descendants of the hero of the dog-fight. " They were (consciously) noted for their brotherly affection and coherence, for their hard sayings and *hard strikings*, which only my father ever grew heartily to detest."

Further particulars about the brothers were published in the *Biographical Magazine*, June 1877, by a man named Martin (founder of that useful compilation, *The Statesman's Year Book*), who had been employed by Carlyle during the labour on *Frederick the Great*. Martin went to Ecclefechan to make enquiries with regard to the traditions still remaining of the Carlyle family. An old inhabitant told him that James Carlyle and his brothers were known as " the fighting masons of Ecclefechan, among the best drinkers and best head-splitters at the annual fairs of the

village. Pithy, bitter-speaking bodies, and awfu' fighters. Thomas and Frank were plagues to fight : they were always fighting and trying to get up disturbances. Old James liked a fight too, but not quite so much. He enjoyed a fight, but mostly kept out of it himself. But all the others went at it terribly ; they hurt the fairs with their fighting."

James Carlyle was a man of exceptional physical strength. He and his brothers were noted for their fighting proclivities. James in later life regretted the hard strikings of his youth. It follows that he and his brothers cannot always have been on the defensive ; they must frequently, perhaps usually, have been the aggressors or there would have been nothing to regret. The natural inference is that the powerful man was a bully.

" He was born and brought up the poorest " said Carlyle of his father; " by his own right hand he had become wealthy, as he accounted wealth, and in all ways plentifully supplied. His household goods valued in money may perhaps somewhat exceed £1,000." He earned £100 in his best year. Some of the neighbours grew even richer, though wholly, said Carlyle, " by better fortune."

He was religious with the consent of his whole faculties. " From the time when he connected himself openly with the religious, became a Burgher (strict, not strictest species of Presbyterian Dissenter), may be dated his spiritual majority ; his earthly life was now enlightened and overcanopied by a heavenly. He was thenceforth a man."

He used to pray that he might be "not ashamed to live nor afraid to die."

James Carlyle was a great talker. Carlyle told Froude that it was from his father's dramatic speech that his own literary style was derived.

" None of us will ever forget that bold, glowing style of his, flowing free from his untutored soul, full of metaphors (though he knew not what a metaphor was) with all manner of potent words which he appropriated and applied with a surprising accuracy you often could not guess whence—brief, energetic, and which I should say conveyed the most perfect picture, definite, clear, not in ambitious colours

but in full white sunlight, of all the dialects I have ever listened to. Nothing did I ever hear him undertake to render visible which did not become almost ocularly so. The fault was that he exaggerated (which tendency I also inherit), yet only in description and for the sake chiefly of humorous effect. He was a man of rigid, even scrupulous veracity. I have often heard him turn back when he thought his strong words were misleading, and correct them into mensurative accuracy."

An aged Scotch minister, who had known James Carlyle, thus described him : " Earnest, energetic, of quick intellect, and in earlier life somewhat passionate and pugnacious, he was not just the man to be popular among his rustic neighbours of Annandale ; but they respected his pronounced individuality, felt his strong will, and his terse, epigrammatic sayings were remembered and repeated many years after his death. In the later years of his life he became a more decidedly religious character, and the natural asperities of his character and manner were much softened."[1]

The mother, about whom little, as a rule, is recorded, is the maker of her children. " The future good or bad conduct of a child depends entirely upon its mother," said Napoleon to his physician Antommarchi at St. Helena. That the mother must count for more than the father is plain, for this, if for no other reason, that the child is much more in the mother's society than in that of the father. Women have a natural sympathy with and understanding of the young, derived from the close intimacy and relationship between mother and offspring. It is in the early years, when the child is learning from its mother, that the character is gradually formed. The brain grows fastest in bulk, and the mental acquirements are greatest, in the first days of life. Each day of growth is, on the average, more important than the following day. It follows that, the mother's influence being paramount in the vital period, it is she, as Napoleon observed, who forms the characters of the children.

[1] *Thomas Carlyle*, by Moncure D. Conway, 1881, p. 17.

Theodore Roosevelt, when he was President of the United States, said much the same thing: "The mother," he declared, "is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important by far than the successful statesman, or business man, or artist, or scientist." Few accept that view, fewer still realise what it implies. For if mothering is so important it should receive adequate study and examination. That more is not done in that direction is due to a superstitious belief in the efficacy of the mothering instinct in women. Yet we all know instances of incompetent, or even bad mothering; we have all seen children growing in an unsatisfactory way, owing to maternal mismanagement. Mothers are liable to human error. They need assistance and instruction, which can only be given them when this great problem has been thoroughly explored and made to reveal its secrets. Endowments of all kinds are given in profusion for the furtherance of the masculine activities and interests, but for the business, science, and art of mothering, for the care of the young, upon which all prosperity and happiness ultimately depend, comparatively little is done; it is left to maternal instinct, as if woman was a mysterious animal.

The mother may, by fault-finding, complaints of domestic trials, create in her children a habit of dissatisfaction, which in after-life they will never be able to throw off; the nagging woman will have discontented offspring. The woman who desires perpetual change teaches her children to abandon whatever has lost its novelty, to cry ever for new toys; as men and women they will be unable to face trouble or persevere against difficulties. The spoilt child will have a spoilt life. The mother may, by excessive anxiety about illness, produce valetudinarianism; by too much concern for questions of food she may encourage greediness, the parent of drunkenness. She may, by her example, create in her children ill-humour in its various forms; jealousies and dislikes; secrecies and deceits; and the tendency to see evil, which is one of the worst of all faults. Or she may, by her loyalty, love of her fellows, charitable interpretations, cheerful, benign atmosphere,

induce the precious habit of appreciation, with its corollaries, generosity of spirit, and good-fellowship. By her daily and hourly example she may teach courage, perseverance, self-control, frank truthfulness. Upon her the children depend; they are her handiwork. The father's influence is comparatively slight in the important early years when habits are being formed.

To visit the sins of the children upon the parents is a sound principle. Here is a happy and successful family, there a collection of failures. In the one case the mother has taught her children self-control, in the other she has encouraged self-indulgence. The results are cumulative, for the mother passes on to her daughter the habits which she has herself acquired from her own mother. If we knew more of this subject we should trace descent from the female, not the male line.

Families in which the women give way to the selfish enjoyment of spoiling their children, where the mothers are self-indulgent and teach self-indulgence, tend to be worsted in the struggle for existence. Nature weeds them out, but she does it so gradually that we do not see what is going on. Our task should be to assist nature. We may, indeed, define civilisation as that state of society in which the processes of nature are effectively supported by man.

The decisive importance of the maternal influence was not understood by Carlyle, who is not helpful about his mother. He admired and loved her, and said she was the only true Christian in the world; but, except that she was religious, we do not learn much about her from her famous son. His wife furnishes some sidelights on her mother-in-law. Writing to her in September 1834, soon after the move to London, Mrs. Thomas Carlyle says: "I continue to love you amidst the hubbub of this 'noble city' just the same as in the quiet of Craigenputtock, and to cherish a grateful recollection of your many kindnesses to me; especially of that magnanimous proposal to 'sit at my bedside' through the night preceding my departure, that I might be sure to sleep!" Carlyle's mother was evidently

a sympathetic woman, prepared to make a sacrifice of her own comfort for the sake of those she loved.

Mrs. Thomas Carlyle saw pride in her mother-in-law. Writing to Mrs. Aitken, her sister-in-law, in August 1835, she says that she herself, and Mrs. Aitken also, were both too proud. " You have it by inheritance from your mother, who (as I have often told herself), with a great profession of humility, is swallowed up in this sin." It was said of Carlyle that there was a proud humility in his bearing. The younger woman complained also that her husband had been spoiled by his mother.

We may conclude, then, with regard to the parents, that Carlyle's father was a dour man, and something of a bully. He had a " natural asperity " ; he was irascible ; a pithy, bitter-speaking body. He had a gift of dramatic speech ; some of his sayings were long remembered in the Ecclefechan district. What he described became ocularly visible. He was a sincere believer in the Scotch Presbyterian Calvinism of his day and neighbourhood. The mother was affectionate and self-sacrificing. She was excessively proud, in spite of her pose of humility. Her religion was very real, seldom out of her mind or her speech.

(2) *Childhood*

There were nine children by the second wife, of whom eight survived. Here is the list :

4th December	1795	Thomas
4th August	1797	Alexander
2nd September	1799	Janet (died 8th February, 1801)
7th July	1801	John Aitken
20th September	1803	Margaret (died 22nd June, 1830)
12th November	1805	James
2nd February	1808	Jean
18th July	1813	Janet

Position in age, and sex, relatively to the other members of the family, is one of the determining influences upon the mental growth of a child. We can draw some inferences from the dates above. The two eldest boys were divided by five and a half and four years respectively from the third child, also a boy. Tom and Alick formed a society of their own into which John could not enter. Tom, being the eldest, was the pride of the family. He was put forward, treated as superior to Alick. He was helped to food first, which both he and Alick observed and felt at every meal. In every event of their lives Tom was first and Alick second, a permanent situation that had permanent results upon their characters. Tom was made responsible for Alick in matters which may appear small to adults, but were of great importance to the growing minds. It is in the earliest days, when precedence in age is relatively greatest, that the character begins to shape. When Tom, aged three, was double the age of Alick, it is certain that he must have been the leader, the initiator and discoverer; once that position is acquired it will be retained. Normally the eldest is the originator and the others are imitators. The eldest thus obtains, from the daily triumphs in the exciting years of growth, self-confidence, and a sense of superiority. This may, and often does, degenerate into supercilious self-satisfaction, and contempt for all rivalry.

The eldest son is in danger of being regarded by his father as a domestic rival, and his example is of such importance that he is liable to be judged with a severity to which the other children may not be subjected. The mother, on the other hand, usually has feelings of peculiar affection for her first baby. Tom was the mother's favourite. He was given a better education than his younger brothers, except John, for whom Carlyle himself had to provide the means. It was to Tom they all looked, parents and children, to raise the standing and reputation of the family.

The Carlyle children ran about barefoot; their food consisted of milk, porridge, and potatoes; there was never

any scarcity, never anything to be called hardship. In complexion they took after their fair-haired father. The mother's dark hair was inherited by only one of the children, Jean, nicknamed " Craw " for that reason.

The scenery in the neighbourhood of Ecclefechan is pastoral, with gentle slopes and occasional plantations of woods. The main road from England to the West of Scotland passes by the village. This border land had been the scene of Cameronian persecutions. There was a spirit of rebellion towards the Government which succeeded the Puritan Revolution, and did not recognise the Solemn League and Covenant.

Religion was a matter of vital importance. Daily prayers were said in every household. The Sunday sermon was discussed. It was one of the chief events of the week. Carlyle's parents were among those who took their religion seriously. Their creed had in it more of the Old Testament than the New. The Burgher services at Ecclefechan were conducted in a meeting-house thatched with heath, by James Johnstone, " the priestliest man," said Carlyle, " I ever under any ecclesiastical guise was privileged to look upon." As his religion enjoined upon him, Johnstone thought it sin even to desire the approval of his congregation. Whether it is possible to avoid such sin may be doubted. A hypocritical pose of indifference is almost inevitable. People came long distances on foot on Sundays, to the Ecclefechan meeting-house. Edward Irving, afterwards Carlyle's great friend, was in the habit of walking over from Annan.

Carlyle's parents, the mother especially, invoked frequently the name of God, and spoke often of the future life, in a tone of fear, accompanied with a subdued hope. They looked upon the world in which they lived with a certain distrust and apprehension. They cherished vague expectations of some impending disaster, as God's punishment for the sins of mankind.

It was natural for successful and ambitious parents, especially for a religious and proud mother, to desire to see the eldest son in the pulpit. If Tom had been the

second son and Alick the eldest, Alick would have been sent to school, and Tom would have been the farmer. Being the eldest, Tom went to Annan Academy, while Alick followed the plough. On the 24th May, 1805, Tom and his father walked the six miles from Ecclefechan to Annan, where Tom lodged with a relative of his mother, named Waugh.

CHAPTER III

BOYHOOD

AT Annan Academy Carlyle was bullied. In the *Reminiscences*, written in 1866, he says that his mother had forbidden him to hit back, an injunction which may have been due to a fear lest he should become as quarrelsome as his father and uncles. He says that this was the most miserable period of his life, that he was always weeping, so that he came to be called " Tom, the Tearful " ; until one day, when he had been two years at the school, he did hit back and with such effect that he was never more molested. In *Sartor Resartus*, Book II, Chapter II, written in 1831, he says that " though perhaps in an unusual degree morally courageous, he succeeded ill in battle, and would have avoided it." This was due to his " virtuous principles, for if it was disgraceful to be beaten it was only a shade less disgraceful to have so much as fought. He wept often ; indeed to such a degree that he was nicknamed *Der Weinende* (the Tearful), which epithet, till towards his thirteenth year, was indeed not quite unmerited. Only at rare intervals did the young soul burst forth into fire-eyed rage, and, with a stormfulness (*Ungestürm*) under which the boldest quailed, assert that he too had Rights of Man, or at least of Mankind. In all which, who does not discern a fine flower-tree and cinnamon-tree (of genius) nigh choked among pumpkins, reed-grass and ignoble shrubs ; and forced if it would live, to struggle upwards only, and not outwards ; into a *height* quite sickly, and disproportioned to its strength ? "

It appears, then, that Carlyle took with him to school, in addition to the normal conceit of an eldest son, the

favourite of his mother, a pronounced belief in his superiority to his schoolfellows ; he was a genius, a flower-tree among ignoble shrubs. It is not surprising that his schoolfellows should have objected to be regarded as inferior beings. And when we remember that Carlyle's father and uncles had a local reputation for being fighting bullies, what happened to him is easy to understand.

A child who has been petted at home, taught to regard himself as of a special quality, not like others, inevitably exhibits disdain for his schoolfellows. He holds himself aloof, declines to accept the prevailing tone, refuses to associate himself with the spirit of the place, an attitude which the other boys are justified in resenting. They retaliate upon him in their barbarous way, by the only means at their disposal. This experience of being marked out, and bullied, at school, is of immense influence in the formation of character. It is not the genius that invites the bully so much as the bullying that helps to produce the genius. The boy has, owing to the atmosphere of adulation in which he has lived, regarded himself as a being apart ; he finds that his schoolfellows dislike him and tyrannise over him ; he becomes a rebel, hostile to a social order in which he is maltreated instead of being worshipped. And he is driven into himself, forced to develop on his own lines. He learns to be self-centred and solitary while living in a crowd. He acquires feelings of contempt and dislike for his fellows, and yet at the same time he develops a longing for their appreciation and recognition. Ambition, which the supercilious, self-satisfied, eldest son might not otherwise have felt, is aroused by the hostility of his schoolfellows, which at least shows that he is not like everybody else.

When he had been four and a half years at Annan, and had nearly reached the age of fourteen, Carlyle was sent to Edinburgh University. Some neighbours told James that his son would, after a University career, despise his ignorant parents. The father declined to allow such a consideration to influence him. The expense, though by

no means a matter of indifference to him, was not crippling.

On the 7th November, 1809, Carlyle set out to walk to Edinburgh, distant about seventy miles. He was guided by a companion older than himself, Tom Smail, who had been at Annan with him and to College the previous year. Carlyle's father and mother walked with them through the village on a dark frosty morning. With the help of a lift in a cart for part of the way, the boys did the distance in three days. Tom Smail led the way, a pace or two ahead, whistling some forlorn tune through his teeth. Smail, like Carlyle, was intended for the career of a minister. Both of them took the course of Arts and Divinity.

In his first session at Edinburgh, Carlyle attended the Latin class under Christison and the Greek under Dunbar. In December 1809 and January 1810 he borrowed from the University library Robertson's *History of Scotland*, Cook's *Voyages*, Gibbon, Vol. I., three volumes of Shakespeare, two volumes of the *Arabian Nights*, Congreve's *Works*, two volumes of Hume's *England*, *Gil Blas* and a volume of the *Spectator*.[1] In the following session, 1810–11, he attended the Mathematical class under Leslie, and the Logic under Ritchie. In 1811–12 he took Moral Philosophy under Brown, whose teaching influenced J. S. Mill and his school. In 1812–13 he was still with Leslie for Mathematics, and he took Natural Philosophy under Playfair.

He did not acquire any proficiency in Latin or Greek. He found, later, that his pupil, Charles Buller, aged 15, had learnt more of the classical languages, at Harrow, than he himself. Mathematics interested him, owing, he said, "mainly to the accident that Leslie alone of my Professors had some genius in the business, and awoke a certain enthusiasm in me. For several years geometry shone before me as the noblest of all sciences, and I prosecuted it at my best hours and moods."

The friends Carlyle made during his University career

[1] *Edinburgh Sketches and Memoirs* (David Masson), pp. 229, *et seq.*

were serious lads, as poor as himself, who had also perhaps walked to Edinburgh ; many of them were, like Carlyle, supplied with porridge, ham, salt butter, and potatoes, sent from the farm of their parents, the carrier taking back their linen to be washed at home.

In the vacations Carlyle corresponded with several of his fellow students. One of them, a boy named Hill, addressed Carlyle as Dean, or Jonathan, as if he were another Swift. On the 1st January, 1814, when Carlyle was just eighteen, Hill wrote to him : " You mention some two or three disappointments you have met with lately. For shame, Sir, to be so peevish and splenetic ! Your disappointments are ' trifles light as air ' when compared with the vexations and disappointments I have experienced." He refers to a love affair—" but why do I talk to *you* about such things ? There are joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, with which a Stoic Platonic humdrum bookworm sort of fellow like you, Sir, intermeddleth not, and consequently can have no idea of." Another letter begins : " Dear Doctor—I received yours last night, and a scurrilous, blackguarding, flattering, vexing, pernicked, humorous, witty, daft letter it is. Shall I answer it piecemeal as a certain Honourable House does a speech from its Sovereign, by echoing back each syllable ? No. This won't do. Oh ! How I envy you, Dean, that you can run on in such an offhand way, ever varying the scene with wit and mirth, while honest Peter must hold on in one numskull track to all eternity pursuing the even tenor of his way, so that one of Peter's letters is as good as a thousand." The letter proceeds to advise the Dean to " fall in love as soon as you can—you will be the better for it."

At the age of eighteen Carlyle was peevish and splenetic ; he wrote scurrilous, blackguarding, pernicked, humorous, and witty letters ; he could not fall in love.

Carlyle's correspondents treasured his letters. A college friend, Thomas Murray, preserved those he received.[1]

[1] The originals were most kindly shown to me, some years ago, by the then owner, Mr. Campbell Hunter, a descendant of Murray. Extracts from some of them were published in 1881 by Moncure Conway.

The first letter, written on the 24th June, 1813, when Carlyle was seventeen years of age, is the earliest known of Carlyle's letters. It exhibits his sympathetic nature. He tells Murray that he had come across a mutual acquaintance of theirs, an old man, who was in need of food and rest. Carlyle relates how he succeeded in obtaining for him food and lodging.

In other letters to Murray, Carlyle shows that he is interested in the female sex, but on his guard, and inclined to be contemptuous. He speaks also of the proofs of the Christian faith, which he considers to be unassailable. On the 22nd August, 1815, when he was nineteen years of age, he acknowledges the authorship of an article under the title "Thunder," which had been published in a local journal. Thunder was an appropriate subject for Carlyle's first essay.

After leaving Edinburgh in 1814, Carlyle became mathematical master at his old school, Annan Academy. The salary, about £70 a year, made him independent of his father, and enabled him to lay by a few pounds every year. Annan was only two miles distant from Mainhill farm, where his parents were now living, James Carlyle having abandoned his trade of mason for that of a farmer.

On the 25th July, 1814, Murray wrote to Carlyle: "I have had the pleasure of receiving, my dear Carlyle, your very humorous and friendly letter, a letter remarkable for vivacity, a Shandean turn of expression, and an affectionate pathos, which indicate a peculiar turn of mind, make sincerity doubly striking and wit doubly poignant. You flatter me with saying my letter was good; but allow me to observe that among all my elegant and respectable correspondents there is none whose manner of letter-writing I so much envy as yours. A happy flow of language either for pathos, description, or humour, and an easy, graceful current of ideas appropriate to every subject, characterise your style. This is not adulation; I speak what I think. Your letters will always be a feast to me, a varied and exquisite repast; and the time, I hope, will

come, but I trust is far distant, when these our juvenile epistles will be read and probably applauded by a generation unborn, and that the name of Carlyle, at least, will be inseparably connected with the literary history of the nineteenth century."

To this remarkable prophecy Carlyle replied: "Oh! Tom, what a foolish flattering creature thou art! To talk of future eminence in connection with the literary history of the nineteenth century to such a one as me! Alas! my good lad, when I and all my fancies and reveries and speculations shall have been swept over with the besom of oblivion, the literary history of no century will feel itself the worse. Yet think not, because I talk thus, I am careless of literary fame. No; Heaven knows that ever since I have been able to form a wish, the wish of being known has been the foremost. Oh Fortune! thou that givest unto each his portion in this dirty planet, bestow (if it shall please thee) coronets and crowns, and principalities and purses, and pudding, and power upon the great and noble and fat ones of the earth. Grant me that, with a heart of independence, unyielding to thy favours and unbending to thy frowns, I may attain to literary fame; and though starvation be my lot, I will smile that I have not been born a king."

This is the first indication we have of Carlyle's yearning for fame, which was one of the dominant features of his character.

The prophecy of Murray intensified Carlyle's rage at the obscurity in which he lived. He wrote to Murray that he was obliged to live "like Pelican in his wilderness to avoid the cant and slang of the coxcombs, the bloods, the bucks, the boobies with which all earth is filled." The workmen in the neighbourhood, certain weavers and cobblers, were "the carrion and offal of creation." To Mitchell, another Edinburgh friend, he spoke of men as "despicable Yahoos." Mitchell sent him a warning "against the temper with respect to this world which we are sometimes apt to entertain," and a suggestion that young men like themselves "ought to think how many are worse off than they," and

" should be thankful for what they had, and not allow imagination to create unreal distress."

Discontent, contempt for mankind, imaginary distress, were already exhibited by Carlyle at the age of nineteen.

CHAPTER IV

EDWARD IRVING AND MARGARET GORDON

AS a Divinity student Carlyle had to read in Divinity Hall of Edinburgh University, a Latin essay. The subject for 1815 was "Natural Religion." He made efforts to induce Murray, and then Mitchell, to go to Edinburgh with him, but eventually he had to find his way alone, and he duly read his essay.

During this Edinburgh visit he met Edward Irving. It was one of the important events of his life. Irving was a native of Annan, the son of a prosperous tanner. Three years older than Carlyle, he had preceded him at Annan school as a boy, then at Edinburgh as a student. He took his degree in April 1809, and in the following year became master of a school at Haddington. From Haddington he was promoted to the charge of a larger school at Kirkcaldy.

The meeting with Carlyle took place at the house of Dr. Waugh, with whose father Carlyle had boarded when at school at Annan. Irving was accompanied by Nichol, a teacher of mathematics. To Irving's enquiries about friends in Annandale, Carlyle's replies were short and surly with many a stolid "I don't know." Irving remarked, "You seem to know nothing," whereupon Carlyle flared out, "Sir, by what right do you try my knowledge in this way? Are you grand inquisitor, or have you authority to question people and cross-question at discretion?" Waugh and Nichol promptly burst in with laughter, and the incident passed off. Irving bore no grudge; "the basis of him," says Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*, "at all times was fine manly sociality, and the richest, truest good-nature."

The master of the parish school at Kirkcaldy was lazy

and incompetent and the parents desired a substitute. Professors Christison and Leslie of Edinburgh suggested the name of Carlyle. He accepted the position and began his work at Kirkcaldy in November 1816. He was received by Irving as a brother. "Blessed conquest of a friend in this world," wrote Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*, "that was mainly all the wealth I had for five or six years coming."

At Annan Carlyle had been very unhappy, with no congenial society or companionship, outside his own family. At Kirkcaldy he had Irving; that alone made an immense difference in his feelings. Irving was tall, strong, handsome. He had a breezy, buoyant, hearty nature, full of appreciation of all that is good in the world. Ambitious, and yet obscure, he never gave way to miserable wailings, never vituperated his fellow mortals. Nobody ever met him but loved him. And yet, as he showed the world in due course, though lovable, he was a genius.

Soon after his arrival at Kirkcaldy, Carlyle abandoned the Church as a career. In March 1817 he went to Edinburgh to call on Dr. Ritchie, for the purpose of arranging for the prescribed discourse in Divinity Hall. Finding Ritchie "not at home," he accepted the omen and gave up all further thought of the ministry. He disliked the idea that, in order to obtain a kirk, he would have to bow to persons having authority. Although he spoke at the time more of the practical than the religious aspect, we know, from later avowals, that a definite change of opinion occurred in this Kirkcaldy period, hastened by the reading of Gibbon.

Irving was to Carlyle at this time very much like an admired and followed elder brother. He arranged, for the summer vacation of 1817, a walking tour of four persons, himself and Carlyle, and two other schoolmasters, named Brown and Pears. They went, through the Trossachs, to Glasgow. At a certain point Brown and Carlyle separated from the others. These two were received at Roseneath by a friend of Brown, Campbell, factor of the Duke of Argyll. Carlyle was encouraged to hold forth to Campbell and his two sisters—"excellent lean old ladies,

with their wild Highland accent, wiredrawn but genuine good manners and good principles . . . they were to my rustic eyes of a superior, richly furnished stratum of society; and the thought that I too might perhaps be 'one-and-somewhat' (*Ein und Etwas*) among my fellow creatures by and by, was secretly very welcome at their hands."

The visit to the factor's sisters was felt by Carlyle to be a rise in society. His first attempt at literature was a description of this journey. He sent it to "some Magazine edited in Edinburgh," and it "vanished without sign."

Out of his salary of £100 a year at Kirkcaldy, Carlyle contrived to save substantially. He was able to pay for his brother John's education at Annan, followed by Edinburgh. On the 17th March, 1817, he wrote from Kirkcaldy to his mother: "The school is doing pretty well, and my health through the winter has been uniformly good." He sent a book for John, and a scarf for his mother. "A shawl of the same materials would have been warmer, but I had no authority to get it. Perhaps you would like to have a shawl also. If you will tell me what colour you prefer, I will send it you with all the pleasure in the world. . . . My father once spoke of a threshing machine. If twenty pounds or so will help him, they are quite ready at his service."

His mother wrote to him, in spite of the great difficulty she had in the actual penmanship:

"Mainhill,
"*June* 10, 1817.

"Dear Son,

"I take this opportunity of writing you a few lines, as you will get it free. I long to have a crack, and look forward to August, trusting to see thee once more, but in hope in the meantime. Oh, Tom, mind the golden season of youth, and remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Seek God while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. We hear that the world by wisdom knew not God. Pray for His presence with you, and His

counsel to guide you. Have you got through the Bible yet? If you have, read it again. I hope you will not weary, and may the Lord open your understanding.

"I have no news to tell you, but thank God we are all in our ordinary way. I hope you are well. I thought you would have written before. I received your present and was very proud of it. I called it 'my son's venison.' Do write as soon as this comes to hand and tell us all your news. I am glad you are so contented in your place. We ought all to be thankful for our places in these distressing times, for I dare say they are felt keenly. We send you a small piece of ham and a minding of butter, as I am sure yours is done before now. Tell us about it in your next, and if anything is wanting.

"Goodnight, Tom, for it is a very stormy night, and I must away to the byre to milk.

"Now, Tom, be sure to tell me about your chapters.[1] No more from

"Your old,
"MINNIE."

In that sentence, "the world by wisdom knew not God," is to be found the origin of Carlyle's denunciation of science and of all attempts to "account for" things.

Affectionate letters passed continually between the members of this family. They were read and re-read, and treasured with care. Large numbers of them have been preserved to this day.

When he returned to Kirkcaldy in the autumn of 1818, Carlyle found that a private teacher had taken from him most of his pupils; only twelve were left. The school was leaving him. Irving also was going. Carlyle sent in his resignation, which was duly accepted. He was asked whether, if a private school could be formed for him, he would remain for another year, and replied in the affirmative, but it was found impossible to collect the necessary subscribers. Carlyle gave up the trade of schoolmaster because he could not give satisfaction to parents.

[1] Of the Bible.

Even with a school he would have been miserable, after the departure of Irving, who introduced him into society. He followed his friend and benefactor to Edinburgh, with the intention of giving private lessons. Irving found him two pupils at once, who paid him, for three hours a day, £6 6*s*. a month.

The Christmas holidays were spent with Irving, at Kirkcaldy. Carlyle was at the time paying court to Miss Margaret Gordon, a pupil of Irving's at Kirkcaldy, to whom Irving had introduced him. Miss Gordon was the daughter of Dr. Gordon, deceased. She was living at Kirkcaldy with her aunt, Mrs. Usher. Carlyle was attracted by her, and received some encouragement at this time.

The summer of 1819 was spent with his parents at Mainhill. There were discussions about religion, between mother and son, which were distressing to both of them. But Carlyle enjoyed the farm life, and the family society. There was always love and sympathy on the one side, and love and gratitude on the other, in spite of all differences even on the vital subject of religion. Carlyle did his best to avoid any expressions which might give pain to his mother.

In September 1819, Irving went to Glasgow as assistant to Dr. Chalmers. When Carlyle returned to Edinburgh in the autumn he found it a very desolate place, without Irving. His intention now was to become a lawyer. He enrolled on the 17th November, 1819, in the class of Scots Law, and attended the lectures of Hume, nephew of the great David.

Feeling solitary and neglected, he wrote to Irving in a doleful tone, and received in reply a long letter of advice and encouragement, dated 28th December, 1819: "Known you must be before you can be employed. Known you will not be for a winning, attaching, accommodating man, but for an original, commanding, and rather self-willed man. Now establish this last character, and you take a far higher grade than any other. How are you to establish it? Just by bringing yourself before the public as you are. First find vent for your notions." He advised Carlyle

to write articles for the *Edinburgh Review* and *Blackwood's Magazine*.

Following his advice, Carlyle wrote a review of a French book upon the theory of gravitation. He left the manuscript at the door of Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, on the 24th January, 1820. The paper was neither acknowledged nor returned—a most disheartening experience, which filled Carlyle with despair.

He wrote home a letter about his health which caused alarm. Jack was commissioned to reply to him : " Your father and mother, and all of us, are extremely anxious that you should come home directly if possible, if you think you can come without danger. And we trust that, notwithstanding the bitterness of last summer, you will still find it emphatically a home." (The reference is to the religious differences.) " My mother bids me call upon you to do so by every tie of affection, and by all that is sacred. She esteems seeing you again and administering comfort to you as her highest felicity. Your father also is extremely anxious to see you again at home." His father added a postscript : " My dear Tom, I have been very uneasy about you ever since we received your moving letter, and I thought to have written to you myself this day and told you all my thoughts about your health, which is the foundation and copestone of all our earthly comfort. But, being particularly engaged this day, I caused John to write. Come home as soon as possible, and for ever oblige, dear son, your loving father, James Carlyle."

The letters of the parents nearly always contained some reference to their own health, with enquiries concerning the condition of their son. It was from them that Carlyle learned his habits of complaints. Judging from the correspondence, one would infer that health was one of the chief topics of conversation in the family.

In the winter of 1819-20, when Carlyle was twenty-three years of age, his complaints were persistent. There was abdominal pain, and difficulty in sleeping. These are not uncommon symptoms among solitary, unmarried, young men, who have still to make their way in the world. What

is uncommon is a continuous wail like that which came from the man whom his schoolfellows had named "Tom the Tearful."

Carlyle never had a day's serious illness in his life. He was occasionally confined indoors for a few days by a sore throat or a cold, but he was less susceptible than most men to such occurrences. With these trifling exceptions he never experienced any incapacitating indisposition, but was always capable of a considerable mental or physical exertion. He did not suffer as most men do from exposure to cold or rain (he seldom wore an overcoat or carried an umbrella); and he lived to an advanced age. Froude says: "Of all the men whom I have ever seen, Carlyle was the least patient of the common woes of humanity. Nature had, in fact, given him a constitution of unusual strength." And he quotes from a letter written by Carlyle to his father: "I often grieve for the uneasiness my complaining costs you and my dear mother, who is of feebler texture in that respect than you. But by this time she must be beginning to understand me; to know that when I shout 'Murder' I am not always being killed."

His complaints were excessive, unmanly, and inconsiderate.[1] When he found himself alone in Edinburgh, Irving having gone to Glasgow, he gave himself up to a wallowing in dejection which does not increase one's respect for him as a man; especially as his contention always was that his will and his mind were at the mercy of his body. In a note-book he wrote, "more than nine-tenths of my faults are due to this infernal disorder in the stomach,"[2] an easy way of shirking responsibility for one's actions. One prefers the saying attributed to Nicholson, at Delhi, in the Mutiny, 1857. A fellow officer was complaining that his stomach would not tolerate a certain item of food. Nicholson said: "My stomach would not dare to object to any food I chose to give it." If we were

[1] Mr. Gilchrist, a friend and admirer of Carlyle, said that his "boundless complainings and wailings were *in fact* certainly a deficient manliness."

[2] *Two note-books of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton.

all to give voice to complaints of our ailments as Carlyle did, on similar grounds, what a world of lamentation we should live in !

Carlyle entertained the common idea that " nerves " are proof of a superior nature. Many persons are gratified, as doctors know, to learn that they are " highly strung." In a letter to Mill, written in 1839, Carlyle expressed his belief that " fineness of organisation, and a sensitive, easily injured, nervous system" were "a primary condition of all talent, of all spiritual worth whatsoever."

We are sometimes told that genius is a form of madness, a product of disease, like ambergris in a whale, or the pearl of an oyster. But if the civilised man is more sensitive in some directions than the savage, he has a much greater capacity for self-control. The savage is liable to uncontrollable attacks of nervousness, without adequate cause ; he is much nearer to madness than the civilised man. To be highly strung is evidence, not of " fineness of organisation " so much as of self-indulgence.

Early in the year 1820, Dr. Brewster, afterwards Sir David, engaged Carlyle to write for the *Edinburgh Encyclopædia*, biographical notices of celebrities, beginning with the letter M—Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Montaigne, Montesquieu, Moore, etc. Besides the emolument, which, though small, was very welcome, Carlyle derived benefit from the exercise in composition. But he could not be satisfied with such work, and was in a very depressed condition.

He found that he had, after all, no natural inclination for the legal profession. At the close of the session in April 1820, he decided to go no further with the law. He left Edinburgh to visit Irving at Glasgow. He was introduced to Dr. Chalmers, who is said to have remarked that the young man was " a lover of earnestness more than a lover of truth."[1] The character of Carlyle could hardly be better described in a single sentence.

At the conclusion of the Glasgow visit, " Irving actually drew from me," says Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*, " by

[1] *Thomas Carlyle*, by John Nichol, p. 29.

degrees, in the softest manner, the confession that I did not think as he of the Christian religion," a disclosure which in no way impaired the friendship between them.

In the summer of this year 1820, the acquaintance with Margaret Gordon came to an end. In some respects it resembled the later intimacy with Jane Welsh. Miss Gordon, like Miss Welsh, was the daughter of a doctor, then deceased. Both ladies were in a social sphere above that in which Carlyle had been reared. Both became interested in their suitor, recognised his gifts, and urged him not to let them lie fallow. The guardians objected to the courtship on the ground that Carlyle's position and prospects were inferior. He succeeded in inducing each of the ladies to take part in a secret correspondence for a time. Margaret Gordon left Scotland for London. If she had remained accessible, like Jane Welsh, the correspondence might have continued. Carlyle's letters, and his persistence, might have won Margaret Gordon as they ultimately won Jane Welsh.

In her final letter of the 28th June, 1820, Miss Gordon wrote to Carlyle : " And now, my dear friend, a long long adieu ; one advice, and as a parting one consider, value it. Cultivate the milder dispositions of your heart. Subdue the more extravagant visions of the brain. In time your abilities must be known. Among your acquaintance they are already beheld with wonder and delight. By those whose opinion will be valuable, they hereafter will be appreciated. Genius will render you great. May virtue render you beloved ! Remove the awful distance between you and ordinary men, by kind and gentle manners. Deal gently with their inferiority, and be convinced they will respect you as much and like you more. Why conceal the real goodness that flows in your heart ? I have ventured this counsel from an anxiety for your future welfare, and I would enforce it with all the earnestness of the most sincere friendship. Let your light shine before men, and think them not unworthy the trouble. This exercise will prove its own reward. It must be a pleasing thing to live in the affections of others. Again adieu."

This was the last direct communication Carlyle had with Margaret Gordon, though he continued to hear about her from Irving. She married, 14th January, 1824, Alexander Bannerman, nephew of Sir Alexander Bannerman, Baronet. Carlyle saw her twice in London, many years later, though without any recognition beyond a look; his remarks on these chance passings-by, written in the *Reminiscences* more than forty-five years after the personal acquaintance had ceased, show that Margaret Gordon had not been forgotten.

This was a very unhappy time. Carlyle had given up in turn the Church, the School, and the Law; he had little private teaching; his literary prospects were dismal; the young lady of his choice had sent him away. He wrote the most doleful letters, full of complaints about his health, and of anger with the world. He longed for sympathy, and when he received it, he turned fiercely on the sympathiser. When one of them said he was very sorry for him Carlyle felt as if he could have thrown him out of the window for his sorrow.

Irving continued to console and encourage him. He wrote: "I think you have within you the ability to rear the pillars of your own immortality. You make me proud of myself when you connect me so much with your happiness. Would that I could contribute to it as I most fondly wish, and one of the richest and most powerful minds I know should not now be struggling with obscurity and a thousand obstacles."

Carlyle became as angry with Irving for his sympathy as with the gentleman whom he could have thrown out of the window for his compassion. Irving expostulated, 15th March, 1821: "My dear Sir, is it to be doubted that you are suffering grievously the want of spiritual communion, the bread and water of the soul? and why, then, do you, as it were, mock at your calamity or treat it jestingly. I declare this is a sore offence. You altogether mistake at least *my* feeling if you think I feel anything but the kindest sympathy in your case, in which sympathy I am sure there is nothing degrading, either to you or to me."

Later, Irving sent further words of encouragement: "I am beginning to see the dawn of that day when you shall be plucked by the literary world from my solitary, and, therefore, more clear admiration; and when from almost a monopoly I shall have nothing but a mere shred of your praise. They will unearth you, and for your sake I will rejoice, though for my own I may regret. But I shall always have the pleasant superiority that I was your friend and admirer, through good and through bad report, to continue, so I hope, to the end."

Carlyle was now twenty-five years of age. He had written nothing yet, except the encyclopædia articles, which are quite conventional in tone. But his power of literary expression had already been exhibited both in his correspondence and in his conversation. It was admitted by all who knew him that he was a remarkable man, and a career of fame was confidently predicted. His arrogance, his airs of superiority, his aloofness were also noted; he appeared to be indifferent to the opinions of his fellow beings. We know, however, that he was intensely eager for recognition, and that it was a fierce pride that gave him these airs of defiance. He was already a persistent grumbler about his health, a youthful valetudinarian, who ascribed all his failings to physical causes, whereas in reality the trouble was in the mind, in the rage and despair at the continued obscurity.

Many a gifted young man has gone through the same painful experiences. What is wanted is not a man's compassion, but a woman's smile, a heavenly greeting which heals all the wounds of injured vanity. Carlyle had wooed, and had been rejected; his case was forlorn and miserable. Salvation for him would be found in the admiration and affection of a being of the other sex, a lady of good social position, with literary tastes, and if possible, possessed of worldly goods.

CHAPTER V

COURTING JANE WELSH

IN May 1821, Irving—the name occurs at every step of Carlyle's early progress—introduced his friend to Miss Jane Welsh, only child of the late Dr. Welsh, of Haddington. When Irving went to Haddington to manage the school there, Dr. Welsh, the leading medical man of the district, engaged him to give lessons to his only child, then aged ten. The child fell in love with the tall, handsome young man. In the following year, 1812, Irving went to Kirkcaldy, and there he became engaged to Miss Martin, daughter of the minister.

In September 1819 Dr. Welsh died. It was a terrible blow to his daughter, now aged eighteen. Dr. Welsh had educated her like a boy as much as possible. She had been taught Latin at an early age ; she was a precocious child, with the ambition to make a name in literature. She wrote verses ; at fourteen she composed a tragedy, " rather inflated, but extraordinary for her age," writes Froude. She acquired from her father confidence in her superiority over her neighbours, and the belief that she had exceptional abilities. With his death, she lost her dearest guide and companion. For her mother she never had the same feeling of love and admiration.

The acquaintance with Irving was resumed and a correspondence was commenced between him and Miss Welsh. The intimacy was allowed to go rather far, considering Irving's engagement to Miss Martin. Miss Welsh in one letter sent him a lock of hair. Her old childish passion was revived. Irving was tempted, but Miss Martin, or her parents, would not release him.

" Something might have come of it," said Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*, " had not Kirkcaldy been so peremptory, and stood by its bond." Miss Welsh told Carlyle some years afterwards that it was she who had reminded the faithless Irving of his engaged honour, and persuaded him to marry Miss Martin, but it would seem that the Martin obduracy was the deciding factor.

Irving told Carlyle about Dr. Welsh and his daughter : " It was from him (probably in 1818)," wrote Carlyle in the *Reminiscences*, " that I first heard of her father and her ; some casual mention, the loving and reverential tone of which had struck me. Of the father he spoke always as one of the wisest, truest, and most dignified of men. Of her as a paragon of gifted girls, far enough from me both, and objects of distant reverence and unattainable longing at that time." In *Sartor Resartus* he says : " Blumine's was a name well known to him. . . . Herself also he had seen in public places. . . only as a magic vision, for him inaccessible, almost without reality. Her sphere was too far from his ; how should she ever think of him ? "

With Irving's assistance the longing did not remain unattainable, the magic vision became a reality. Irving took Carlyle with him to walk the sixteen miles from Edinburgh to Haddington. They put up at the inn ; and called on Mrs. Welsh in the evening. Forty-five years later Carlyle remembered his sensations : " The drawing-room seemed to me the finest apartment I had ever sat or stood in ; in fact it was a room of large and fine proportions, looking out on a garden. . . . The summer twilight, I remember, was pouring in rich and soft ; I felt as one walking transiently in upper spheres, where I had little right even to make transit."

Miss Welsh was a good, attentive listener, a faculty which to a man like Carlyle was not merely agreeable but essential. She was an heiress, having inherited her father's house at Haddington and his country property, Craigenputtock, Dumfries, worth about £200 a year. Save in conventional beauty she was in every way more

desirable than Margaret Gordon, both for herself and her dowry.

The visit lasted four days. Before leaving, Carlyle obtained permission to send books to Miss Welsh and to give her assistance in her studies. There were meetings in Edinburgh. Miss Welsh was so friendly that Carlyle's hopes rose high. He succeeded in inducing her to promise to write to him, against the wish and without the knowledge of her mother. But though she complied she was unhappy about it, complained that he was teaching her disobedience and deceit, and finally insisted that if the correspondence was to continue his letters would have to be shown to Mrs. Welsh, or read to her.

Miss Welsh urged Carlyle to make the most of his abilities, to use his precious time and the noble power that God had given him; and she told him not to laugh at fame. He replied: "If I fail to effect anything in my day and generation, anything to justify Providence for having called me into this Universe, the weakness of my ability not of my will shall be to blame. . . . Either I shall escape from this 'obscure sojourn,' or perish, as I ought, in trying it." He admitted that he was ambitious, and that it pained him to contrast what he would be with what he was; he declared that while outwardly he seemed timid there were within him the feelings of a tiger.

Through Irving, who was in London as minister of the Scottish Chapel in Hatton Garden, Carlyle obtained the appointment of tutor to the two sons of Mrs. Buller, wife of a retired Anglo-Indian official. Mrs. Buller attended Irving's chapel and asked his advice with regard to her sons. Irving suggested Carlyle as tutor, and residence at Edinburgh. Mrs. Buller acquiesced, and Carlyle, on receiving Irving's letter explaining the offer, with a salary of £200 a year, and an allowance for board, wrote an acceptance, with the proviso that there should be a preliminary trial for a month or two. The boys reached Edinburgh in February 1822 and the tutorship at once

began. It proved satisfactory to all concerned. Mr. and Mrs. Buller treated Carlyle with kindness and consideration, the boys liked him, and he liked them. He lived in lodgings at 3 Moray Street, Edinburgh.

It was in the summer of this year, 1822, that the incident occurred which is related in *Sartor Resartus*. Carlyle, in the person of Teufelsdröckh, was making his way along Leith Walk (the *Rue Saint-Thomas de l'Enfer* of *Sartor*), "When, all at once, there rose a thought in me, and I asked myself: What *art* thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou forever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped! What is the sum total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil and Man may, will or can do against thee! Hast thou not a heart; canst thou not suffer whatsoever it be; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet while it consumes thee? Let it come then; I will meet it and defy it! And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul; and I shook base Fear away from me forever. I was strong, of unknown strength; a spirit, almost a God. Ever from that time, the temper of my misery was changed: not Fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance. . . . It is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-birth, or Baphometic Fire-Baptism: Perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a man."

Carlyle did not cease to pip and whimper; he never shook off whining sorrow. But it is true that his spirits were rising with his better prospects. Irving's introductions to the Bullers and to Jane Welsh had given him financial independence, with acceptance in good society, and an admitted correspondence with a young girl of social, spiritual, and worldly attractions. He was plucking up spirit, and one day, as he was walking alone, he experienced a flush of exultation.

With her property, Miss Welsh was a desirable young woman, and, being a clever flirt, she had admirers. In a

letter of this time to her friend Eliza Stodart,[1] she included Carlyle in the list. She had been reading *Héloïse*, and told her friend that she would never find a lover like St. Preux, nor a husband like Wolmar, and that to no man would she "ever give her heart and pretty hand who bears to these no resemblance. George Rennie! James Aitken! Robert MacTurk! James Baird!!! Bobby Angus! O Lord, O Lord! where is the St. Preux? Where is the Wolmar?" She had received a letter from Thomas Carlyle, who was something like St. Preux: "He has *his* talents, *his* vast and cultivated mind, *his* vivid imagination, *his* independence of soul, and *his* high-souled principles of honour. But then—Ah, these *Buts*—St. Preux never kicked the fire-irons, nor made puddings in his tea-cup. Want of Elegance! Want of Elegance, Rousseau says, is a defect which no woman can overlook."

The correspondence with Carlyle continued. Carlyle encouraged Miss Welsh in her hopes of literary fame. He declared she had natural abilities and that he expected her to become distinguished. He sent her long, elaborate—sometimes tedious—letters about books. They were really letters of courtship, as both of them knew full well.

There was much against the man. He was poor; he came from a social stratum below hers; his manners were lacking in polish—he kicked the fire-irons; and he made no physical appeal to the woman; she did not experience in his presence the feelings that Irving, and George Rennie, had aroused. She admired his mind and his character. But she told him plainly that she was not in love with him.

In the summer of 1823, Carlyle went with the Bullers and his pupils, to Kinnaird House, near Dunkeld. He suffered much from ill-health there; his letters are full of the subject. He went to Edinburgh in order to obtain medical advice, and was told to dose himself with mercury and to give up tobacco. He followed the advice, but obtained no benefit. He had a horse for riding, but even that

[1] *Early letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle*, edited by D. G. Ritchie, pp. 32–4.

healthy exercise did little good. Miss Welsh would not have him until his prospects had improved—that was the real cause of the trouble.

She succeeded at last in inducing him to set to work. He wrote a *Life of Schiller*, and translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST VISIT TO LONDON

THE Bullers left Kinnaird House for Edinburgh, and London, early in the year 1824. Carlyle met Miss Welsh in Edinburgh. An explosion of temper on her part drove him away. She wrote apologising for her behaviour and promising him " a whole dozen of voluntary kisses at the earliest opportunity," a promise of which he insistently reminded her in his letters until they met again at Haddington in May.

The situation which had been reached is further illustrated by the legal settlement, made by Miss Welsh at this time, of the income of Craigenputtock to her mother. Her reason for this disposition was that if she married, her property would become her husband's, and she did not choose to put it in his power to lessen her mother's income. In her will, also made at this time, she left the reversion of Craigenputtock to Carlyle.

On the 5th June Carlyle followed the Bullers to London. He lodged with the Irvings, at 4 Myddleton Terrace, Pentonville.

Irving was already a celebrity. He had attracted the attention of Sir James Mackintosh, who attended his chapel in Hatton Garden, and heard him speak of certain children, of unknown parentage, as being " thrown upon the fatherhood of God." Mackintosh repeated the phrase to Canning, who went to hear Irving, and was impressed. In a debate in the House of Commons, on the pay of the clergy, Canning said that he had lately heard a Scotch minister, in a church with no endowment, preach the most eloquent sermon he had ever listened to. Then fashion and intellect crowded to the little chapel in Hatton Garden. Members

of the Royal Family attended. Brougham and Canning had their seats engaged for them. A ticket became necessary for admission. Lady Jersey arrived without one and had to sit on the steps of the pulpit. Irving's success was unprecedented. He published some of his sermons. Newspapers and reviews from *The Times* and the *Quarterly* downwards, discussed the new and amazing portent. The attention he received led Irving to believe that the practical necessity of a Christian life would by him be brought home to the world; that he had been chosen as the instrument for a revival of Christianity. And though fashion gradually left him, he kept so large a following of religious-minded people, that he was entitled to expect a continued career of great influence. There is an Irvingite Church still to-day.

Both Miss Welsh and Carlyle gave signs of jealousy. They bestowed upon Irving the name of "The Orator." Carlyle declared that Irving's head had been turned, though he had no evidence at all for the statement. In fact, Irving withstood the intoxication of success with admirable fortitude. He was absorbed in his hope of a revival of Christianity. Applause was as dear to him as to other men, but he was too ardent and earnest in his aim to be substantially affected by it.

In the summer of 1824, while Carlyle was in London, the engagement with the Bullers came to an end. There had been some talk of sending Charles, with Carlyle, to France for a year, but as Carlyle declined to leave Britain, it was decided that the lad should go to Cambridge in the autumn.

In London Carlyle was introduced to some of the chief literary men of the day. He could see no merit in any of them, with the single exception of Allan Cunningham who was, like himself, a mason's son from Annandale. In a letter to his brother John, 22nd January, 1825, he says: "Save Allan Cunningham, an honest Nithsdale peasant, there is not one *man* among them."

This is the typical provincial attitude, of refusal to admit that a world exists greater than that in which the

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narrow-minded observer has been reared. To admire London would be to disparage Ecclefechan. Only two men in London were worth anything; Thomas Carlyle and Allan Cunningham, sons of Annandale masons.

Though he enjoyed criticising his fellow creatures Carlyle did not like Miss Welsh to do the same. "Do not mock and laugh, however gracefully, when you can help it. For your own sake, I had almost rather see you sad. It is the earnest, affectionate, warm-hearted, enthusiastic Jane that I love. The acute, sarcastic, clear-sighted, derisive Jane I can at best but admire. Is it not a pity you had such a turn that way?"

The criticism was justified. Miss Welsh's remarks concerning the society in which she found herself, about her relations in particular, were often unkind. The address she put at the head of one of her letters, written in the house of a relative, was the word "Hell."

Carlyle was introduced by Mrs. Buller to her sister, Mrs. Strachey. He went to Dover, where he saw much of the Irvings, the Stracheys, and Miss Kirkpatrick, a cousin of Mrs. Strachey. At the end of October, Mr. Strachey and Miss Kirkpatrick took Carlyle to Paris, the two men riding on the outside of Miss Kirkpatrick's carriage. In Paris Carlyle saw the body of Louis XVIII lying in state. He met Legendre, whose book on geometry he had translated. He saw Talma on the stage, and he heard Cuvier lecture. He was much affected by the sight of the corpse of an old man, in the *morgue*. He derived immense benefit from the Paris experience; his eyes and ears were wide open; he received impressions of a lasting kind, which helped him when he came to write of the French Revolution.

On his return to London Carlyle wrote to Miss Welsh, 4th December, 1824, that he was so ill that he could not work; it was absolutely necessary that he should live in the country. "Had I land of my own, I should instantly be tempted to become—a farmer!" She replied with the suggestion, not meant seriously, that he should take her estate of Craigenputtock, which was unlet, and in need of a good tenant. This brought from him, 9th January,

1825, a definite proposal that they should marry and set up house together at Craigenputtock. Her answer was, "I little thought that my joke about your farming Craigenputtock was to be made the basis of such a serious and extraordinary project." She loved him, but was not *in love* with him: "I could not marry into a station inferior to my own with the approval of my judgment, *which* alone could enable me to brave the censures of my acquaintance. And now let me ask you, have you any *certain* livelihood to maintain me in the manner I have been used to live in? any *fixed* place in the rank of society I have been born and bred in? No. You have projects for attaining both, capabilities for attaining both, and much more. But as yet you have not attained them. Use the noble gifts which God has given you." Craigenputtock was the most barren spot in the county of Dumfriesshire. For her part she would not spend a month there with an angel: "Think of something else then. Apply your industry to carry it into effect; your talents, to gild over the inequality of our births—and then we will talk of marrying."

Carlyle returned to the Craigenputtock project, suggesting that his brother Alick might rent the farm from her. In her answer, 29th January, 1825, Miss Welsh repeated that she felt no passion for him, and that he must earn a "certain livelihood" and "exercise the profession of a gentleman." She said also, however, that her feelings had gradually changed towards him, and that, if the same progress continued, she would doubtless some day be his wife. Then, on the 14th February, 1825, she wrote: "I know not how your spirit has gained such a mastery over mine in spite of my pride and stubbornness. But so it is. Though self-willed as a mule with others, I am tractable and submissive towards you." She was in love now.

Carlyle left London on the 27th February, 1825. He did so with regret. In his letters to Miss Welsh he spoke repeatedly of the kindness he had received. Mrs. Strachey had given him a gold pencil with a seal, upon which was cut "*Meliora latent*"; and also a superb writing-case.

Mrs. Montagu gave him a seal bearing Schiller's dying words, "Calmer and Calmer."

Carlyle received, on all sides, sympathy and kindness; people were glad to know him, and they did what they could to help him. They encouraged him by saying that better times were coming, and by advising him not to worry about his future. He was the recipient of spontaneous acts of goodwill which are earned only by those who deserve a warm regard.

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE

SOON after his return from London, Carlyle went to Haddington on a visit to Mrs. Welsh and her daughter. He and Miss Welsh were now an engaged couple. In May 1825, he was in occupation of the farm of Hoddam Hill, about five miles from his parents' home, Mainhill. Hoddam was farmed by his brother Alexander; the mother and two younger sisters went there to care for Tom and Alick, while the two elder sisters remained with their father at Mainhill.

At Carlyle's suggestion Mrs. Montagu wrote to his betrothed, who replied, and a regular correspondence ensued between the two ladies, who had never met. The fact that Miss Welsh had at one time been in love with Irving was known to the Bullers, Stracheys, and Montagus. In one of her letters, 3rd July, 1825, Mrs. Montagu urged Miss Welsh to examine her heart before marrying Carlyle. If she retained her old feeling for Irving she had no right to marry anyone else. When Miss Welsh replied that she intended to marry Carlyle, Mrs. Montagu told her that she would never have a clear conscience until she had confessed to Carlyle that she had at one time been in love with Irving. This appeal had its effect. With an anxious heart Miss Welsh wrote to Carlyle, 24th July, 1825, confessing that she had deceived him. She had told him she did not care for Irving, had taken pains to make him believe that, whereas she had loved Irving passionately. She had concealed and disguised the truth.

Carlyle's reply was kind, but gloomy. She exaggerated the matter greatly. Where was the man who did not commit fifty worse faults every year? But did she know

the worth of his affection? It was worse than worthless; it was hurtful, and might be her ruin. What was he, he exclaimed, and what was his father's house, that she should sacrifice herself for him? He felt the inferiority of his position, and realised how much she had helped him in his aspirations. He tried to soothe his vanity with the reflection, so dear to egotists, that he was misunderstood. Nobody knew him, he asserted repeatedly, the best of him, the real self, the "me," was overborne by obstructions and ill-health and never revealed in its purity and beauty. He was conscious of his intense desire for self-expression, and for public reputation, feelings which he had been taught to regard as temptations of the devil, which he could not bring himself to acknowledge openly. Nobody knew his fierce egotism, his restless vanity, his rage with unobservant mankind.

In after years Mrs. Carlyle used to say that her marriage would never have taken place but for the intervention of Mrs. Montagu. Perhaps it brought matters to a crisis, but the correspondence between her and Carlyle was that of plighted lovers before ever Mrs. Montagu wrote to Miss Welsh. It is difficult to believe that nothing less than an explosion was necessary to drive this couple to the altar.

As his affianced bride, Miss Welsh was introduced by Carlyle to his parents. She paid them a visit at their farm, from 2nd to 19th September, 1825. She was heartily received, and returned the greeting with equal warmth. For the rustic homeliness of her betrothed's relations she had long since prepared herself; she behaved towards them always in the most exemplary manner.

Carlyle was now in a happy state of mind. Miss Welsh had been introduced to his family, to the satisfaction of both parties. She was definitely engaged to him, and his health was good. His *Life of Schiller*, and his translation of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* had been published, and had brought him the beginning of a reputation. The improvement in his circumstances is reflected in a passage in the *Reminiscences*, in which he says, "This year I found that I had conquered all my scepticisms, agonising doubtings,

fearful wrestlings with the foul and vile and soul-murdering Mud-gods of my epoch ; had escaped as from a worse than Tartarus, with all its Phlegethons and Stygian quagmires, and was emerging free in spirit into the eternal blue of ether, where blessed be Heaven ! I have for the spiritual part ever since lived, looking down upon the welterings of my poor fellow creatures, in such multitudes and millions still stuck in that fatal element."

Although Carlyle believed that he owed much to Goethe —" I then felt, and still feel, endlessly indebted to Goethe in the business "—it is probable that Miss Welsh counted for more, that without her Goethe would have availed little.

The farm of Craigenputtock was in the market for letting. Carlyle desired that his brother Alick should take it. Alick sent an offer to Mrs. Welsh ; but it was found to be less than that of another bidder and was rejected, on the ground that Mrs. Welsh had bound herself to accept the highest sum. Carlyle was disappointed ; he had hoped that with his family established at Craigenputtock he would have obtained a surer hold over Miss Welsh, and might yet have induced her to live there with him. She begged him to visit her at Templand, but he pleaded ill-health. She renewed her request, and he went, but he was not in a good humour with Mrs. Welsh, owing to the failure of his plan with regard to Craigenputtock, and the visit was not a success. He thought it best thenceforth to avoid the society of Mrs. Welsh, and therefore of her daughter also. He allowed a whole year to pass without making any effort to meet either of them.

In the correspondence during that period there was much discussion of the arrangements to be made for the future life of the engaged couple. Miss Welsh thought she could not leave her mother. She proposed to Carlyle that, when they married, Mrs. Welsh should live with them. He replied, " *The man should bear rule in the house and not the woman.* This is an eternal axiom, the law of nature, which no mortal departs from unpunished." If Mrs.

Welsh lived with them she would have to submit to him as her guardian and director.

Various suggestions were made as to their future home. After a year spent in discussions by letter, it was decided at last that they should marry in the autumn of 1826, and should begin life together in a small house in Edinburgh, No. 21 Comely Bank. The Haddington house was sold, and the furniture moved to Comely Bank. Then Miss Welsh went with her mother to Templand, the home of her grandfather, Walter Welsh, where she was to be married. Mrs. Welsh was to live at Templand with her father.

After a bungling, and not very sympathetic, proposal made by Carlyle that they should travel part of the way to Edinburgh in a carriage with John as companion, and for the rest of the journey in the public coach, a scheme which Miss Welsh vetoed absolutely, it was agreed that the whole distance should be covered in a private chaise, without John. Carlyle then stipulated "that you will let me, by the road, as occasion serves, *smoke three cigars* without criticism or reluctance, as things essential to my perfect contentment." To this tactless request she replied: "Oh, my dearest friend, be always so good to me, and I shall make the best and happiest wife. When I read in your looks and words that you love me, then I care not one straw for the whole universe besides. But when you fly from me to smoke tobacco, or speak of me as a mere circumstance of your lot, then indeed my heart is troubled about many things."

In happier vein Miss Welsh wrote a fine description of her betrothed to her aunt, Mrs. George Welsh. He was poor, of humble birth and unpolished; but "he is among the cleverest men of his day—and not the cleverest only, but the most enlightened; he possesses all the qualities I deem essential in my husband—a warm, true heart to love me, a towering intellect to command me, and a spirit of fire to be the guiding star of my life . . . not a great man according to the most common sense of the word, but truly great in its natural proper sense: a scholar, a poet,

a philosopher, a wise and noble man, one 'who holds his patent of nobility from Almighty God' and whose high stature of manhood is not to be measured by the inch rule of Lilliputs! Will you like him? No matter whether you do or not, since I like him in the deepest part of my soul."

She contributed the furniture for the Edinburgh house, and he provided the housekeeping money, which he had saved from the Buller salary. They were married at Templand on the 17th October, 1826. There were present, Walter Welsh and his unmarried daughter Jean, Mrs. Welsh and John Carlyle. The ceremony was conducted by the Rev. Charles Anderson, minister of Closeburn. Then the two unknowns, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Carlyle, rolled off in their chaise; they reached their small house in Edinburgh the same evening.

CHAPTER VIII

COMELY BANK, EDINBURGH

THE marriage was for Carlyle a certain gain. A wife was a necessity to him, a domestic admirer, an ally and support, a salve to his vanity, a curer of his feeling of solitude, of being neglected by the world. He was proud of his wife, whose position in society was superior to that in which he had been born and reared. The home at Comely Bank was elegant and luxurious compared with the farm house of his parents ; he had a servant, while his mother had been one ; there was a piano for the display of his wife's accomplishments, whereas his mother had not even acquired the ability to write with ease.

At the time of his marriage Carlyle was nearly thirty-one years of age. In figure he was tall, about five feet eleven inches, and lean, his weight never exceeding ten stone. His face had a ruddy, countryman's complexion. The hair was blonde. The eyes, and the general expression, were of a settled melancholy.

In Edinburgh, Carlyle was remarked for his Annandale accent, about which his wife, who spoke Haddington, teased him. The accent and the rough exterior covered a nature which, in spite of its liability to tempestuous outbursts, was fundamentally brotherly. David Masson was told by one who knew Carlyle in the early days of his marriage, that he was " the pleasantest and heartiest fellow in the world, and most excellent company."[1] He made many friends. He wrote sympathetic, kind letters to his correspondents. He spared no effort on behalf of his family, and even gave out financial aid from his narrow

[1] *Carlyle : personally and in his writings* (D. Masson,) p. 44.

means. He expressed repeatedly his affection for all of them. He was devoted to his mother.

Mrs. Carlyle was an attractive woman, though scarcely to be called pretty in the ordinary meaning of the word. Her height was five feet six inches ; dark eyes ; black hair ; a sallow complexion ; a light, graceful figure. Her age was twenty-five when she married. The only child of her parents, she had inevitably been spoiled. She had been taught by her father that she was a being of superior attainments, much above the Haddington standard. Irving, and then Carlyle, had encouraged her to believe that she had literary abilities of a high order. Carlyle said she was a genius, destined to become famous. She learned to look down upon her world. She acquired a sharp tongue, and a caustic pen. Carlyle endeavoured to moderate her sarcastic tone ; he begged her to remember that however superior she was to all her associates, still they were in fact fellow beings.

She had been attracted to Carlyle, as he was to her, at their first meeting. As the acquaintance continued she recognised his abilities ; she believed he would become famous ; in response to his advances, she came gradually to love him. Years afterwards she said that she married for ambition, but the statement is only a half truth. We may admit that if there had been no legitimate cause for ambition there would have been no marriage ; but when she married she was in love. She was taking a risk. Carlyle had hitherto earned very little by his pen, as she frequently pointed out to him. But she felt assured that he would yet justify her confidence, and believed that she would be able to exert a beneficial influence upon him. Her efforts to stimulate him to exertion would, after marriage, be more potent, and she would at the same time, by her care of him, her loving presence, her call upon him for support, make him put forth his utmost efforts.

One evening, early in February 1827, Carlyle set out from the house at Comely Bank, with a letter of introduction in his pocket, to Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. It had been sent him by Procter (Barry Cornwall)

son-in-law of Mrs. Montagu. Carlyle presented the letter to Jeffrey, and was kindly received. Jeffrey called at Comely Bank; he professed to have discovered a remote cousinship with Mrs. Carlyle, and soon became an intimate and valued friend. One of the first results was the publication in the *Edinburgh Review*, July 1827, of an article by Carlyle on Richter; which was followed in the October number by a general review of German literature.

But Carlyle could not support a wife in Edinburgh on the payment he obtained for magazine articles. He returned to the Craigenputtock scheme. His plan was, as it always had been, that Alick should farm the estate, and that he and Jane should live in the house. In March 1827 he went with Alick to inspect the property. The tenant had not yet paid any rent, and no legal lease had been executed; he was induced to give up the tenancy. Alick entered at Whitsuntide, 1827, with his sister Mary to keep house for him.

Carlyle was delighted, but his wife had not overcome her repugnance to Craigenputtock as a place of residence. She was pleased when a letter came from Irving suggesting that her husband should apply for a professorship at the new London University. The nomination was in the power of Brougham. Jeffrey spoke to Brougham on behalf of Carlyle, but he obtained no encouragement.

In December 1827 came another hope. Dr. Chalmers, Professor of Moral Philosophy at St. Andrews University, was about to retire. Carlyle applied for the appointment; he received testimonials from Irving, Buller, Brewster, Leslie, Wilson (Christopher North), Procter (Barry Cornwall) and Jeffrey. In spite of them Carlyle was not the successful candidate.

No professorship being available, and the Comely Bank house having been let to another tenant, Craigenputtock was now inevitable. Mrs. Carlyle dreaded the move. In a letter to John, 7th March, 1828, Carlyle said: "I should have liberty and solitude for aught I like best among the moors—only Jane, though like a good wife she says nothing, seems evidently getting more and more afraid

of the whole enterprise. She is not at all stout of health."

Whatever may have been Mrs. Carlyle's fears of the solitude of Craigenputtock, she was very much in love with her husband and pleased to do whatever he advised. They could live more cheaply on their farm than in a hired house at Edinburgh. They moved into their own home at Whitsuntide, 1828.

CHAPTER IX

SCHILLER AND GOETHE

CARLYLE had been reared in an anti-French atmosphere; his youth had been passed during the years of war with France. The French had been defeated in the Seven Years' War, and again at the end of the Napoleonic War. English and German Protestants had been successful against French Catholics. France had a reputation for immorality which horrified the Annandale peasants, for frivolity which disgusted them, and for polite manners which they regarded as the mark of feebleness and insincerity. Brought up with these ideas, it was natural that Carlyle should prefer the Germans.

Thus, when he came to the study of the German language, in January 1819, he was predisposed in its favour; and he was encouraged by the thought that, as the language was little known in England or Scotland at the time, familiarity with it would be a distinction, and a useful acquirement; he would have few rivals as a translator of German works. Then, as he made progress with the language, he found that it had the features which he admired; it was hard and rugged, qualities which in the rude circles in which Carlyle had been reared were considered to indicate sterling worth and character. The German writers did not, like the French, aim at lucidity and wit; they were absorbed in deep problems, they reflected upon the mysteries of life. Carlyle was attracted by their mysticism, and impressed by their obscurity.

His first published work was an essay on Goethe's *Faust*, which appeared in the short-lived *New Edinburgh Review*, in April 1822. He was not satisfied with it, and did not think it worthy of inclusion in any republication of

miscellaneous writings. Then came, in 1823, the *Life of Schiller*. By the good offices of Irving, the editor of the *London Magazine* was induced to publish it, in parts, the first instalment appearing in October 1823. The parts were afterwards issued as a volume, in January 1825, without the name of the author.

The book contains a fine passage describing the pains and rewards of the literary life, with the oft-quoted remark: "Look at the biography of authors! Except the Newgate Calendar it is the most sickening chapter in the history of man."

Already Carlyle is denouncing cant: "Above all, Schiller has no cant; in any of its thousand branches, ridiculous or hateful, none. He does not distort his characters or genius into shapes which he thinks more becoming than their natural one; he does not hang out principles which are not his, or harbour beloved persuasions which he half or wholly knows to be false." But fear of cant, suspicion of cant, the habit of seeing cant everywhere, the self-consciousness about it which Carlyle did so much to disseminate, are almost as bad as cant itself.

The translation of the first part of *Wilhelm Meister* was published with an introduction, and a chapter on Goethe, in 1824. Carlyle sent a copy to Goethe, and received in return a polite letter of acknowledgment, which was much prized, not least by Miss Jane Welsh.

After his marriage, it was his German work, and the fact that he had received this letter from Goethe, that gave Carlyle some mark of distinction in the literary society of Edinburgh. It may have been at his young wife's suggestion that, on the 15th April, 1827, he sent Goethe his *Life of Schiller*, and also four volumes of his translations of German novels, published early in the year under the title of *German Romance*. The fourth volume was a translation of Meister's *Wanderjahre*. Goethe responded by sending Carlyle a present which delighted him, a box containing five volumes of his poems, a necklace for Mrs. Carlyle, some verses written on a card, a pocket-book for Carlyle, and two medals, one of Goethe himself and

another of his father and mother. On the card with the necklace Goethe wrote :

Denke das nichts besser schmückt
Als wenn man den Freund beglückt.

A literal translation would be, " Think that nothing is more becoming than when one greets a friend." Carlyle's version was,

Think that nought so well the Wife can grace,
As when wedded Wife brings Husband joy.[1]

Mistranslations of this kind are often to be met with in Carlyle's works. In *Past and Present* he converts two of Goethe's lines, which literally translated would be, " Neglect not to put in exercise the forces of goodness," into " Choose well ; your choice is brief and yet endless."

Incorrect quotation, by the insertion of a Carlylean meaning, instead of, even against, that of the author is another of Carlyle's foibles. Goethe's well-known, " *Im Ganzen, Guten, Schönen resolut zu leben* " (" To live resolutely in the whole, the good, the beautiful ") appears in Carlyle, " *Im Ganzen, Guten, Wahren resolut zu leben.*" The quotation was a favourite one with him, and he always gave *Wahren*, the true, for *Schönen*, the beautiful. The misquotations and mistranslations in Carlyle's works are numerous and tendentious ; he was not merely careless and inaccurate ; he would insert his own meaning, even into a famous passage characteristic of a famous man.

When an error of that kind was pointed out to him, he ignored the correction. In his book on Cromwell occurs an inaccurate quotation from the Shakespeare monument at Stratford, which he rendered, " Sweet friends, for Jesus sake forbear." Allingham, the poet, having heard Carlyle repeat the mistake, showed him a photograph of the inscription on the monument, where the words were " Good friend." Carlyle looked at the photograph, but

[1] *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton, 1887, p. 30.

he continued, as before, with his " Sweet friends," both in verbal quotations, and in each successive edition of the *Letters and Speeches*.

A few days after sending off the box to Carlyle, Goethe said to Eckermann, 25th July, 1827 : " In Carlyle it is admirable how he, in his criticisms on our German writers, keeps before him the spiritual and moral essence as the chief factor. Carlyle is a moral force of great significance. He has a great future before him, and indeed one can see no end to all that he will do and effect by his influence.[1] At that date Carlyle had written very little—the *Life of Schiller*, the essay on *Faust*, the introductory matter to the translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, and an essay on Richter. Goethe was speaking of the Carlyle he knew, who had as yet confined himself to the task of spreading in Britain an admiration of Schiller, Richter, and Goethe himself. The Carlyle of *Real-politik* had not yet presented himself.

The cosmopolitanism of Schiller and Goethe found no sympathy in Carlyle. Schiller said : " It is a poor and little aim to write for one nation ; a philosophic spirit cannot tolerate such limits, cannot bound its views to a form of human nature so arbitrary, fluctuating, accidental. The most powerful nation is but a fragment ; and thinking minds will not grow warm on its account, except in so far as this nation or its fortunes have been influential on the progress of the species." This view Carlyle could not accept. His comment was : " Nature herself has, wisely no doubt, partitioned us into ' kindreds, and nations, and tongues ' : it is among our instincts to grow warm in behalf of our country, simply for its own sake : and the business of Reason seems to be to chasten and direct our instincts, never to destroy them. We require individuality in our attachments ; the sympathy which is expanded over all men will commonly be found so much attenuated by the process, that it cannot be effective on any. And as it is in nature, so it is in art, which ought to be the image of it. Universal philanthropy forms but a precarious and

[1] *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton, p. 54 ; *Eckermann's Conversations with Goethe*, p. 276.

very powerless rule of conduct; and the 'progress of the species' will turn out equally unfitted for deeply exciting the imagination."

On this matter Goethe was with Schiller. He sent Carlyle a letter of protest. He tried to create a wider sympathy in Carlyle. He wrote to him, 1st January, 1828, enjoining "as the essence of all wisdom the testament of St. John: Little children love one another."[1] Such breadth Carlyle never attained, in spite of his desire to fall in with Goethe's sentiments.

Expressions of gratitude to Goethe for spiritual consolation occur with frequency in Carlyle's correspondence and works. He said, for instance, that Goethe had helped him to perceive that happiness was not to be desired.

In the Lectures on the History of Literature, delivered in May 1838, Carlyle said: "Goethe, in his *Wilhelm Meister* describes an association of people formed to receive propositions and give responses to them. Many applications for advice were made to the association, in particular for recipes of happiness; all *that*, says Goethe, was laid on the shelf and not answered at all. Now this thing gave me great surprise when I read it. 'What!' I said, 'is it not the recipe of happiness that I have been seeking all my life, and isn't it precisely because I have failed in finding it that I am now miserable and discontented.' After turning it up a great while in my own mind, I got to see that it was very true what he said—that it was the thing all the world were in error in. No man has a right to ask for a recipe for happiness; he can do without happiness; there is something better than that. All kinds of men who have done great things—priests, prophets, sages—have had in them something higher than the love of happiness to guide them. Spiritual clearness and perfection, a far better thing that than happiness. Love of happiness is but a kind of hunger at the best, a craving because I have not enough of sweet provision in this world."[2]

[1] *Correspondence between Goethe and Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton, p. 44.

[2] *Nineteenth Century*, May 1881: "Carlyle's Lectures on the Periods of European Culture," by Edward Dowden.

In the passage referred to, Goethe says : " The formation of his character is not the chief concern with every man. Many merely wish to find a sort of recipe for comfort, directions for acquiring riches, or whatever good they aim at. All such, when they would not be instructed in their proper duties we were wont to mystify, to treat with juggleries and every sort of hocus-pocus, and at length to shove aside. We advanced none to the rank of Masters, but such as clearly felt and recognised the purpose they were born for, and had got enough of practice to proceed along their way with a certain cheerfulness and ease."[1]

There is nothing here about happiness ; but Carlyle habitually spoke of happiness as denoting the comfort and riches which Goethe referred to. Goethe considered as the highest attainment the cheerfulness and ease which Carlyle never ceased to denounce.

In another passage, Goethe does give the recipe for happiness : " Look at men, how they struggle after happiness and satisfaction ! Their wishes, their toil, their gold, are ever hunting restlessly ; and after what ? After that which the poet has received from nature—the right enjoyment of the world : the feeling of himself in others ; the harmonious conjunction of many things that will seldom exist together."

" What is it that keeps men in continual discontent and agitation ? It is that they cannot make realities correspond with their conceptions. . . . Now fate has exalted the poet above all this, as if he were a God. . . . He has a fellow-feeling of the mournful and the joyful in the fate of all human beings."[2]

Goethe considers that happiness is desirable. He defines it as the right enjoyment of the world. The recipe for it is, to have the poet's fellow-feeling for the joys and sorrows of mankind. Goethe was propounding the great truth that the wider a man's sympathies, the larger will be his portion of happiness.

[1] *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* : Carlyle's Translation, Centenary Edition, vol. I., p. 129.

[2] Carlyle's Translation, I., 112.

Carlyle's discussion of the subject is on a different plane. He confounds happiness with pleasure. In *Sartor Resartus* he says, "Love not Pleasure: love God." He had been taught that melancholy—in itself a natural product of a northern climate—is a sign of grace. But while he denounced the desire for happiness, he kept up an incessant wail at his lot. "I have not got what I want" was his constant cry. He passed his life complaining that he had not found the recipe for that which it was hopeless to obtain and wrong to desire. He was totally at variance with Goethe in all this, though he did not know it.

He misinterpreted also Goethe's *Entsagen* (Renunciation), which was an abandonment of unworthy desires for the sake of self-culture. Carlyle's renunciation rested on the doctrine that repression is good for its own sake, that it is a desirable form of self-immolation.

Again, Carlyle never understood Goethe's views on Reverence, though he quoted them frequently.

Goethe was explaining his ideas on education, which three instructors expounded to Wilhelm Meister. They told Meister that they inculcated among the children three Reverences. The youngest children were taught Reverence for what is above us, for "a God above, who images and reveals himself in teachers, superiors. Then comes the second; Reverence for what is under us. . . . We are to regard the Earth with attention and cheerfulness; from the Bounty of the Earth we are nourished: the earth affords unutterable joys; but disproportionate sorrows she also brings us." When these two Reverences have been acquired the pupil is taught to "range himself along with his comrades. Not selfishly isolated; only in combination with his equals does he front the world." The mass of men are marred and stunted by "evil-wishing and evil-speaking. Whosoever gives himself to this soon comes to be indifferent towards God, contemptuous towards the world, spiteful towards his equals; and the true, genuine, indispensable sentiment of self-estimation corrupts into self-conceit and presumption."[1]

[1] Carlyle's Translation, II., 258.

By reverence for the God above us, appreciation of the world beneath us, love for our fellows beside us, we may attain self-respect without conceit or contempt.

Goethe considered the Christian religion to be the last step to which mankind was destined to attain. By it we have learned "to recognise humility and poverty, mockery and despite, disgrace and wretchedness, suffering and death, to recognise these things as divine; nay even on sin and crime to look not as hindrances, but to honour and love them as furtherances of what is holy. Of this indeed, we find some traces in all ages: but the trace is not the goal; and this being now attained, the human species cannot retrograde; and we may say, that the Christian Religion having once appeared, cannot again vanish; having once assumed its divine shape, can be subject to no dissolution."[1] In other passages Goethe repeats this idea. "What a journey had human nature to travel, before it reached the point of being mild even to the guilty, merciful to the injurious, humane to the inhumane." "The veneration of the contradictory, the hated, the avoided we give to each of our pupils, in small portions by way of outfit, along with him into the world."[2]

Though Carlyle quoted these passages, he misinterpreted them. In the Inaugural Address as Rector of Edinburgh University (1866) he defined Goethe's Reverence as "Honour due to those who are greater and better than ourselves; honour distinct from fear. *Ehrfurcht*, the soul of all religion that has ever been among men, or ever will be." It was singularly inappropriate to draw attention to the German word, which means "honour—fear," as denoting honour without fear. It was worse to represent Goethe as an advocate of Carlylean hero-worship. The whole significance of Goethe's discourse was that we should reverence all mankind, however base. Carlyle, on the contrary, taught that we should despise the feeble and suppress the wrongdoers, while we should reverence—not

[1] Carlyle's Translation, II., 260.
[2] Carlyle's Translation, II., 232.

wholly without fear—only those who are more powerful than ourselves.

He thought that Goethe, like the gods, enjoyed the lofty luxury of unhappiness. "The life of all gods figures itself to us as a Sublime Sadness—earnestness of Infinite Battle against Infinite Labour. Our highest religion is named the 'Worship of Sorrow,'" There is no such phrase in *Wilhelm Meister*. Carlyle may have been thinking of Goethe's *die Heiligthum des Schmerzens* (the Sanctuary of Pain): or *die Göttliche Tiefe des Leidens* (the Divine Depth of Suffering). He was capable of converting these phrases into a "Worship of Sorrow" or any other idea that pleased him.

In the *Apprenticeship* the Harper sings:

Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nicht die Kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der Kennt euch night, ihr himmlischen Mächte.

This Carlyle rendered:

Who never ate his bread in sorrow,
Who never spent the darksome hours
Weeping and watching for the morrow,
He knows ye not, ye gloomy powers.

Even into this translation Carlyle intrudes himself. It is characteristic of his self-assertion, and his imperviousness to all ideas that he had not acquired in his youth that he should convert Goethe's *himmlischen* (heavenly) into his own "gloomy." Goethe was saying that the man who has never felt sad must be deficient in feeling and perception. That sorrow should be actually desired, and exhibited as a proud possession, would have been intolerable to Goethe.

In *Sartor Resartus* (The Everlasting Yea) Carlyle refers to Goethe's teaching about Duty: "May we not say, however, that the hour of Spiritual Enfranchisement is even this: When . . . you discover, with amazement enough like the Lothario in *Wilhelm Meister*, that your

'America is here or nowhere'? The situation that has not its Duty, its Ideal, was never yet occupied by man. Yes, here, in this poor, miserable, hampered, despicable Actual, wherein thou even now standest, here or nowhere is thy Ideal."

"The safe plan," says Goethe, "is always simply to do the task that lies nearest us." He makes Lothario say, on his return from America: "In America, I fancied I might accomplish something; overseas, I hoped to become useful and essential; if any task was not begirt with a thousand dangers, I considered it trivial, unworthy of me. How differently do matters now appear! How precious, how important seems the duty which is nearest me, whatever it may be!"

"I recollect the letter which was sent me from the 'Western World,' said Jarno. It contained the words: I will return, and in my house, amid my fields, among my people, I will say: *Here or nowhere is America.*"

"Yes, my friend! and I am still repeating it."[1]

The Actual was not miserable, hampered and despicable, to Goethe. The official, routine, duties of his post in the service of the Grand Duke of Weimar, were among the influences which gave him serenity of mind. If he had never had anything to think about except his literary work, and his own personality and culture, he would not have discovered the hygienic value of a daily occupation. The Grand Duke's business was Goethe's America. He accepted it gratefully, whereas Carlyle regarded duty as a hard-earned offering for the propitiation of a stern Deity.

Under Goethe's auspices a translation was made into German of Carlyle's *Life of Schiller*. The book was illustrated with two engravings of Craigenputtock, from drawings by Moir (translator of Wallenstein) which had been sent to Goethe by Carlyle; and it contained an Introduction by Goethe, dated April 1830, in which he expressed his hope of the growth of international goodwill, by means of literature.

Goethe sent Carlyle a packet containing six medals, of

[1] Carlyle's Translation, II., 11.

which two were to be given to Scott, and the remaining four to other admirers. Often had Carlyle seen Scott in Edinburgh, but obscurity was too proud to ask for an introduction to fame. Goethe hoped that by means of the medals his chief adherents in Scotland would be united in a common bond. The translator of *Wilhelm Meister* should become known to the translator of *Götz Von Berlichingen*, especially as they were so often in Edinburgh at the same time.

When the medals arrived, Scott was in London, and the letter which Carlyle wrote to him appears to have been mislaid or forgotten, for no answer was sent. Scott was at the time overwhelmed by the Ballantyne bankruptcy. On his return to Edinburgh the medals were delivered to him by Jeffrey. He received them with gratification ; he spoke of Goethe as his master, and sent a polite message to Carlyle.

For Goethe's eightieth birthday, 28th August, 1831, " fifteen English friends," inspired by Carlyle, sent him a seal, with a letter, from " the spiritually taught towards their spiritual teacher." The seal was in the form of a star, encircled by the serpent of eternity, and the motto, " *Ohne Hast Aber Ohne Rast.*" Goethe sent a reply of thanks in verse.

Carlyle said that Goethe saved him from spiritual despair at the time when, owing partly to his reading of Gibbon, he had rejected the miracles of the Christian faith. He derived from Goethe the satisfactory conviction that one may believe in God, and appreciate Christianity without accepting literally every word of the New Testament. He saw in Goethe one who had passed through the despondency and sentimentalism of Werterism, and had shown the way to a recovery which Byron never attained. " Close thy Byron ; open thy Goethe," said Carlyle. He liked Goethe's pregnant phrase " *Stirb und werde* " (die in order to be). " No man can read me," said Goethe, " without gaining a certain interior liberty." For many of us Goethe has been, especially in our youth, a sane influence, encouraging rational enjoyment, and giving a

sense of proper exultation. Carlyle felt this for a time, during the period when he was corresponding with Goethe. He saw that Goethe had a healthy mind, which he had not, which he wished to acquire.

His religion taught him that God is ever present, and that it is an impiety to discuss Him. He was pleased, therefore, with Goethe's "*Was wär ein Gott der nur von aussen stiesse*?" (What sort of a God would it be who only pushed from outside?); and his "*Wer darf Ihn nennen*?" (Who dare name Him?)

But there was little else in which Goethe and Carlyle agreed. Goethe's broad tolerance, his mildness to the guilty, was at variance with Carlyle's most cherished convictions. Goethe was world-wide, while Carlyle was provincial. Goethe had no hatreds, while Carlyle revelled in his. Goethe's Hellenism—against which Puritanism was the reaction—and his talk ("palabra," Carlyle called it) about art, were antipathetic to Carlyle. On the other hand, Goethe was deficient in the humour which was so marked in Carlyle, and he cared nothing for the mathematics to which at one time Carlyle was devoted. Nor was Goethe interested in history, being absorbed in contemplating the world in which he lived. The provincial Scotch Calvinist and the broad-minded German man of the world had few ideas in common.

Carlyle had been reared in a stifling atmosphere; in his struggle to obtain a breath of wholesome air he went to Goethe for assistance. He repeated, after Goethe, that God is Good, but he could not bring himself to believe that the jealous and inexorable Judge whom he had been taught to fear, was really a God of Love. He tried to think well of mankind, in spite of the religion in which he had been baptised; his brotherly, sympathetic nature rebelled against the cold creed of Ecclefechan, and he felt that he was being encouraged in this by Goethe. In his diary he wrote at this time of "the *new* moral principle of our era, steadfastness for the right, without exasperation against the wrong, as Goethe taught," but he never really accepted it. The influence of Goethe came too late, when

Carlyle was approaching his twenty-fifth birthday. He did not succeed in acquiring the Goethe spirit; his rearing and education could not be thrown off.

Though the influence of Goethe upon Carlyle was neither substantial nor permanent, there can be no question of the encouragement, and the distinction, he obtained from his correspondence with the great man. He wrote to Goethe, that to be regarded as his friend was an honour of which he could not have dreamed. That was, indeed, an incontestable benefit.

CHAPTER X

CRAIGENPUTTOCK

CRAIGENPUTTOCK was described by Carlyle as a solitude like the Sahara, a lone desert where without work one might go mad. In the *Reminiscences* he said, "Once, in the winter time, I remember counting, that for three months, there had not been any stranger, not even a beggar, called at Craigenputtock."

Soon after her arrival, before the novelty had worn off, Mrs. Carlyle was able to write to her friend, Miss Stodart: "Craigenputtock is no such frightful place as the people call it. . . . The solitude is not so irksome as one might think. If we are cut off from good society, we are also delivered from bad; the roads are less pleasant to walk on than the pavement of Princes Street, but we have horses to ride, and, instead of shopping and making calls, I have bread to bake and chickens to hatch. I read and work, and talk with my husband, and never weary." But she could not refrain from thoughts of Edinburgh. She asked her friend to send her the Edinburgh news. "Dear Edinburgh! I was very happy there, and shall always love it, and hope to see it again often and often before I die."[1]

She was making the best of things. What she really felt may be gathered from the horror she evinced before her marriage, at the thought of living at Craigenputtock, and from the bitter terms in which she spoke of the place, after the experiment.

Life in a remote spot, with no children to occupy her, no suitable companion of her own sex, is hurtful to the

[1] *Early Letters of J. W. Carlyle*, p. 129.

nervous system of a woman. Solitude breeds fancies. Inanimate objects tend, in the absence of human fellowship, to take imaginary shapes. Whoever has experienced the feeling that complete solitude, far from other men, may give, will understand what Mrs. Carlyle meant when she spoke of her "strange shadowy existence." An excessive self-consciousness, such that one's own physical movements are startling, that the very trees, and grass, seem to be watching an intruder from another sphere, may create a real terror ; a condition in which relief may be obtained by the feeling of co-partnership which a house, a gate, a chair, may give, visible proof that fellow beings, like oneself, have existed, and may still exist, to protect one from the absolute of isolation. It is the silence of nature that makes pulsation so startling.

Women, who seldom experience even a comparative solitude, are peculiarly susceptible to its injurious effects. On one occasion, when Carlyle had left his wife alone at Craigenputtock, she became so severely affected that Alick and Jean were sent from Scotsbrig, to give her human companionship. She thanked her mother-in-law : "If some such mercy had not been vouchsafed me I think I must soon have worked myself into a fever or other violent disorder ; for my talent for fancying things, which is quite as great as your own, had so entirely got the upper hand of me that I could neither sleep by night nor rest by day. I have slept more, since they came and have kept me from falling into dreams, than I had done for a fortnight before." Years afterwards Mrs. Carlyle told Miss Jewsbury that the solitude of Craigenputtock did an injury to her nerves from which they never recovered.

In the summer and autumn there were visitors—Mrs. Carlyle's uncle, Robert Welsh, Mrs. Graham of Burnswark, Henry Inglis. Mrs. Carlyle's mother came from Templand, and Carlyle's parents from Scotsbrig. Jeffrey brought his wife, child, maid and lap-dog. After his visit Jeffrey wrote to Carlyle: "I cannot bring myself to think that either you or Mrs. Carlyle are naturally placed at Craigenputtock . . . pray understand that few things in this world can

give me more gratification than being able to be of any serious use to you. Take care of the fair creature who has trusted herself so entirely to you. Do not let her ride about in the wet, nor expose herself to the wintry winds that will by-and-by visit your lofty retreat; and think seriously of taking shelter in Moray Place[1] for a month or two, and in the meantime be gay and playful and foolish with her, at least as often as you require her to be wise and heroic with you." Evidently Jeffrey thought that Carlyle was not as solicitous for his wife's welfare, physical and spiritual, as he should have been.

In the autumn of 1829 the Carlyles went to Edinburgh for a few weeks, a change which Mrs. Carlyle enjoyed very much. Returned to Craigenputtock she had an alarming illness, a sore throat with suggestion of diphtheria. The weather was severe. Mrs. Welsh had great difficulty in reaching her daughter through the snow-drifts, from Templand.

In June 1830 came the first loss in the Carlyle family. Carlyle's sister Margaret died at Scotsbrig. He was very much affected by the event.

Though poor, Carlyle never suffered real privation. He and his wife had riding horses; he possessed a gig; she had a piano; the furniture was of superior quality. There was hired domestic service. Whenever he desired a change he could afford the expense. Compared with Ecclefechan neighbours, with schoolfellows and the bulk of his college-mates, he was an exceptionally comfortable man. At Craigenputtock the cost of living was small, as the farm provided porridge, potatoes, butter, milk, eggs, poultry, ham. But Carlyle had advanced Alick money for stocking the farm, and he had spent nearly three hundred pounds in providing his brother John with his University career, his doctor's degree, and his residence in Germany. In spite of what he earned by writing for Reviews his cash resources had at this time come near to extinction. He was determined to write only to please himself. He made too much of this, striking heroic attitudes, but there was nothing

[1] Jeffrey's house in Edinburgh was in Moray Place.

unusual or singular in his resolve not to write what he did not believe.

That the Craigenputtock sojourn was injuring the health and spirits of Mrs. Carlyle, and increasing the misanthropic tendencies of her husband, was the opinion of Jeffrey. He did his utmost to induce Carlyle to come out of the desert. To overcome the financial obstacle he offered to make him an allowance of £100 a year; he said that nobody should know of it, not even Mrs. Jeffrey. One is not surprised that Carlyle declined to become Jeffrey's pensioner. Few men would have accepted such a position. Carlyle's pride was hurt, as is evident from the unpleasant remarks he made on the subject in the *Reminiscences*.

In August 1830 Jeffrey invited Carlyle and his wife to Craigrook, his house in the outskirts of Edinburgh. The change would have been most welcome to Mrs. Carlyle, but her husband did not desire it. In September Jeffrey and his wife went to Craigenputtock. In answer to Jeffrey's enquiries, Mrs. Carlyle gave expression to complaints which were not quite loyal to her husband. She allowed Jeffrey to believe that she was being sacrificed to her husband's ambition.

Carlyle was conscious of abilities which had not yet fructified. "I have a book in me," he wrote, "that will cause ears to tingle, and one day out it must and will issue." At other times he was less confident. He wrote in his journal: "Doubtful it is in the highest degree whether ever I shall make men hear my voice to any purpose or not. Certain only that I shall be a *failure* if I do not, and unhappy." He spoke often of his contempt for fame, but it was the one thing above all else for which he longed.

His thoughts turned to London. In September 1830 he began to write a piece which gradually shaped itself into the ever-famous *Sartor Resartus*. He hoped to get it published in London. He thought also of giving lectures in London, "in my own Annandale accent" he wrote to John, 4th March, 1831. With these hopes, with *Sartor* in his pocket, and his Annandale accent for the lecturer's

platform, Carlyle left Craigenputtock for London on the 4th August, 1831. He had been prevailed upon by Jeffrey to accept a loan of £50. In London he lodged at 8 Woburn Buildings, Tavistock Square, where John was in residence.

The most affectionate letters passed between husband and wife. " Heaven bless my Darling ! " was the ending of one of her letters, and the next one began with " Beloved Good. Blessings on thee for thy precious letters ! Truly they are my life in death ! "[1] Goody was Carlyle's name for his wife, and she responded with Good. He wrote to her, 15th August 1831 : " Your kind precious letter came to me on Friday like a cup of water in the hot desert. It is all like yourself : so clear, precise, loving and true to the death. I *see* poor Craigenputtock through it, and the best little Goodykin sitting there, meditating on me and watching my return. Oh, I am very rich were I without a penny in the world ! But the Herzen's Goody must not fret herself and torment her poor sick head. I will be back to her ; not an hour will I lose. Heaven knows the sun shines not on the spot that could be pleasant where she is not."

He related his efforts to obtain a publisher for *Sartor Resartus*, which figures as Teufelsdröckh, or Dreck, in his letter. He had taken it to Murray, with a letter of introduction from Jeffrey, but the prospects were not hopeful.

He spoke of his friends. He was seeing much of Irving, the Bullers, the Stracheys, the Montagus. New acquaintances were Mr. and Mrs. Austin, and J. S. Mill.

No two men could be farther apart than Carlyle and Mill, the mystic and the utilitarian. Mill, with his Benthamism, his greatest happiness of the greatest number, his logic, his political economy, his precise mind, represented just the very things which were abhorrent to Carlyle. That they should have become friends is a remarkable fact highly creditable to both of them. The initiative came from Mill, who was ten years younger than Carlyle; he was twenty-five and Carlyle thirty-five, when they met for

[1] " More new letters of Jane Welsh Carlyle," edited by Alexander Carlyle, *Nineteenth Century*, August 1914.

the first time. The relationship was that of an admirer towards his senior. Carlyle was at his best in such circumstances.

Soon after Carlyle's arrival in London, Jeffrey succeeded in providing for John, who had been in very poor circumstances, trying to get payment for articles on medical subjects. Jeffrey obtained for him the post of travelling medical attendant to Lady Clare, with a salary of three hundred guineas, travelling expenses also being paid. John was thenceforth in easy circumstances, and was able to pay back a loan he had obtained from Jeffrey and also, in time, what Carlyle had advanced. But Carlyle's pride made intolerable any sense of obligation. It is a remarkable fact that in the letter to his wife announcing John's appointment, he did not tell her that it was due to Jeffrey, but declared that he could get little good of Jeffrey, who had no leisure for anything but politics and could do nothing for him. Soon afterwards Carlyle was very rude to Jeffrey ; he reported to his wife how he had behaved, with evident satisfaction.

With John off his hands Carlyle could afford to have his wife with him in London. She arrived on the 1st October, 1831, bringing with her a supply of oatmeal, ham, and salt butter, from the Scotsbrig farm. Her husband had found lodgings at 4 Ampton Street, Mecklenburgh Square, off the Gray's Inn Road. With their Annandale and Haddington accents, his remarkable conversation, and her clever talk and graceful presence, they attracted attention. Fraser insisted that Carlyle should sit for his portrait to Maclise, that the drawing might be reproduced in *Fraser's Magazine*. Carlyle was better known than he had realised. He found that he had admirers, even disciples. To those already mentioned we may add Leigh Hunt, Hayward, Lytton Bulwer, Fonblanque, Taylor (afterwards Sir Henry) Galt, Lockhart, Hogg, Charles Lamb (whom Carlyle failed to understand).

But no publisher would accept *Sartor Resartus*. The book was too obscure, and too unusual. This was a great disappointment. Carlyle thought that he had a message

of immense importance to deliver. He wrote to his mother: "There *is* want of instruction and light in this mirk midnight of human affairs: such want as probably for eighteen hundred years there has not been. If *I* have any light to give, then let me give it." In his diary, later on, he wrote: "Neither fear thou that this thy great message of the Natural *being* the Supernatural will wholly perish unuttered." The world had waited eighteen hundred years for him, and he could find no publisher.

The extraordinary triumph achieved by Irving encouraged Carlyle to think that he too would obtain a hearing, if he remained in London. But the magazine articles would not provide sufficient funds, and the lecturing he found, on enquiry, was not hopeful. The Reform Bill occupied men's thoughts. Political speakers alone commanded an audience. In order to be able to remain in London Carlyle required that settled source of income which Miss Welsh, during the courtship, had often insisted upon. It was probably at his wife's entreaty that he told Jeffrey that he would be glad of any appointment that would enable him to live in London. Jeffrey did his best; he spoke to influential people about Carlyle; but without effect.

While in London Carlyle received tidings of the death of his father, at the age of seventy-three, on the 22nd January, 1832. He spent three days in writing an account of his father, which was ultimately published by Froude in the *Reminiscences*. To his family he wrote letters in which he expressed his confidence in a future life: "We shall meet no more till we meet in that *other* sphere where God's presence more immediately is . . . death, what mortals call death, is properly the beginning of Life." When Mrs. Carlyle's aunt Jeannie died, he wrote to his wife, "Surely, surely, there is a life beyond death, and that gloomy portal leads to a purer and an abiding mansion?" On the death of Mrs. Welsh he wrote to his wife, "We shall go to her; she will not return to us. As sure as we live, we shall yet join her."

James Carlyle left a comfortable little fortune for one

who had begun life with neither money nor education. He bequeathed nothing to Thomas or to John, the two who had been given school and University education, an arrangement considered fair and reasonable by all concerned. The other five surviving children received £120 each, and the widow £28 a year.

The death of his father made it advisable for Carlyle to go to Scotsbrig to be with his mother. On the 25th March, 1832, the Carlyles left London. After a few days with Mr. Welsh, Mrs. Carlyle's uncle, at Liverpool, they took the steamer to Annan. They spent a fortnight at Scotsbrig with the widowed mother, and then returned to Craigenputtock. Both of them felt the change, after London, where they had made so many friends.

One day, the 25th August, a carriage stopped at the door, and out of it stepped a young American, Ralph Waldo Emerson, furnished with introductions from J. S. Mill and from Gustave d'Eichthal, an acquaintance of Dr. John Carlyle at Rome. The Carlyles had been warned that they might expect Emerson, and preparations had been made. He stayed the night.

Emerson, then aged thirty, seven years younger than Carlyle, had read Carlyle's essays as they appeared in the magazines, and had admired them. This visit was the beginning of a life-long friendship. There was much in common between the two idealists, individualists, believers in instinct—far more than between Carlyle and Mill or Goethe—though there were grave differences also.

Emerson's pilgrimage to see him gave Carlyle encouragement. He felt that he was becoming known. The idea of a permanent sojourn in solitude at Craigenputtock became more than ever abhorrent; but it was doubtful whether he could afford to live in London. While he was hesitating he heard that a Professorship of Astronomy was about to be established at Edinburgh, for the new Observatory. The post of Astronomer Royal for Scotland was to be created. It was understood that Jeffrey would have influence in the nomination, and to Jeffery Carlyle wrote asking for the appointment.

Jeffrey replied that the place would be given according to the recommendations of Herschell, Airy, Babbage, and six or seven other men of unquestionable eminence in the astronomical department, without the least regard to unprofessional advisers (like himself). Nobody would be appointed who was not both practised and of acknowledged skill in observing. Brewster, Napier, and Herschell were known to look upon tactical dexterity and acquired habits of observation as the most important qualifications. They were unlikely to trust the handling of their instruments to one who had not served an apprenticeship in the mechanical parts of the business. They were already crying out about the mischief which another professor had occasioned by his awkwardness, mischief which it would cost £500 and many months of work to repair. The letter made it quite plain that Carlyle could not expect the appointment if a qualified and practised astronomical observer was available. The right man was found, and appointed, Thomas Henderson, who had already distinguished himself as an observer at the Cape. He had been at one time secretary to Jeffrey. Henderson fully justified his selection. His contributions to astronomy have earned for him three columns of acknowledgment in the *Dictionary of National Biography.*

But Jeffrey added a lecture. He could not set much value on paradoxes and exaggerations, and no man ever did more than Carlyle to obstruct the success of his doctrines by the tone in which he set them forth. It was arrogant, obscure, vituperative, and carried no conviction. It might impress weak, fanciful minds, but it would only revolt calm, candid, and thoughtful persons.

Soon afterwards, Jeffrey wrote to Carlyle about a Chair of Rhetoric at Edinburgh, which was vacant. He said that he himself would have appointed Carlyle, if it had been in his power, but the Commissioners with whom the decision lay would not consider the name of Carlyle. Owing to his perversions and absurdities there was not the least chance of his ever being admitted as a teacher in any regular seminary.

Carlyle never forgave Jeffrey. The two men continued to meet on friendly terms, but as Froude says, Carlyle nourished a "deep, ineffaceable resentment" against Jeffrey for his behaviour on this occasion. Carlyle's contemporary letters, coupled with the *Reminiscences*, furnish ample evidence in support of Froude's assertion. Jeffrey had introduced Carlyle to the *Edinburgh Review*, a service of immense importance, which was the making of Carlyle; he lent him money, offered him £100 a year, and obtained a valuable appointment for his brother John. A man who, like Carlyle, is tormented by a ferocious pride from which he can never free himself, suffers contortions of pain whenever a benefit is bestowed upon him. Jeffrey had done too much for Carlyle.

The London project was now finally decided upon. After eight years of a childless marriage, it seemed that the expense of a family need not be apprehended.

Carlyle went to London to look for a house. With Leigh Hunt's assistance he found one, not far from Hunt's, 5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea, which was to be let at £35 a year. The Haddington furniture which had travelled to Comely Bank, and then to Craigenputtock, was now despatched to London. On the 10th June, 1834, the Carlyles entered their new home. It is now a Carlyle museum.

CHAPTER XI

EARLY ESSAYS

EXCLUDING the *Life of Schiller*, and the translations, we may consider Carlyle's literary career to have begun with the *Edinburgh Review* article on Richter. For the next ten years, until the publication of the *French Revolution* in June 1837, all Carlyle's work appeared in Reviews. Here is the list of articles :

At Comely Bank

1827	June	"Jean Paul Friedrich Richter"	*Edinburgh Review*
	Sept.	"State of German Literature"	do.
1828	Jan.	"Life and Writings of Werner"	*Foreign Review*
	April	"Goethe's *Helena*"	do.
	July	"Goethe"	do.

At Craigenputtock

1828	Oct.	"The Life of Heyne"	*Foreign Review*
	Dec.	"Burns"	*Edinburgh Review*
1829	Jan.	"German Playwrights"	*Foreign Review*
	April	"Voltaire"	do.
	June	"Signs of the Times"	*Edinburgh Review*
	July	"Novalis"	*Foreign Review*
1830	Jan.	"Jean Paul Friedrich Richter again"	do.
1830	Feb. / May	"Translation of Richter's Review of Madame de Staël's *Allemagne*"	*Fraser's Magazine*
	Nov.	"On History"	do.
1831	Jan.	"Cruthers and Johnson"	do.
	March	"Schiller"	do.
	,,	"Taylor's Historic Survey of German Poetry"	*Edinburgh Review*
	July	"The Nibelungen Lied"	*Westminster Review*
	Oct.	"German Literature of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries"	*Foreign Quarterly Review*
	Dec.	"Characteristics"	*Edinburgh Review*
1832	March	"Schiller, Goethe and Madame de Staël,' Translation of Letters	*Fraser's Magazine*
	April	"Biography"	do.
	May	"Johnson"	do.
	June	"Death of Goethe"	*New Monthly Magazine*
	June	"Corn Law Rhymes"	*Edinburgh Review*

1832	Aug.	"Goethe's Works"	*Foreign Quarterly Review*
	Oct.	"The Tale, by Goethe"	*Fraser's Magazine*
	Nov.	"*Novelle*, by Goethe"	do.
1833	April	"Diderot"	*Foreign Quarterly Review*
	July, Aug.	"Cagliostro"	*Fraser's Magazine*
	Nov., Dec., Feb., March, April, June, July, Aug.	"Sartor Resartus" (written in 1830–1)	*Fraser's Magazine*

At Cheyne Row

1835	Jan.	"Death of Edward Irving"	*Fraser's Magazine*
1836–1837	Dec., Feb.	"Diamond Necklace" (written at Craigenputtock in 1833)	do.
1837	Jan.	"Mirabeau"	*London and Westminster Review*
	April	"Parliamentary History of the French Revolution"	do.

The total, excluding the eight parts of "Sartor Resartus," amounts to thirty-seven articles. Of these twenty were devoted to German literature and philosophy, six to French subjects, while the remaining eleven are miscellaneous.

In the first period, which we are considering in this chapter, German literature was the chief subject, with excursions to Burns and Voltaire, and to political philosophy, in "Signs of the Times." Then came the German-inspired "Sartor Resartus," written in 1830–1. The third period is notable for "Characteristics," followed by essays on Boswell's Johnson and on the death of Goethe. After that event Carlyle's attention was given to French subjects.

In the first essay, on Richter, Carlyle says, "Humour is the ruling quality with Richter. . . . True humour springs not more from the head than from the heart; it is not contempt, its essence is love; it issues not in laughter, but in still smiles, which lie far deeper. It is a sort of inverse sublimity; exalting, as it were, into our affections what

is below us, while sublimity draws down into our affections what is above us. 'Humour' is, in fact, the bloom and perfume, the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature."

Here Carlyle was describing himself and his own great gift of humour.

So also, in Richter's style he saw his own. After noticing Richter's disrespect for grammatical precision, he says: "Figures without limit; indeed the whole is one tissue of metaphors, and similes, and allusions to all the provinces of Earth, Sea and Air; interlaced with epigrammatic breaks, vehement bursts or sardonic turns, interjections, quips, puns and even oaths!" Richter has "an imagination vague, sombre, splendid, or appalling; brooding over the abysses of Being; wandering through Infinitude, and summoning before us, in its dim religious light, shapes of brilliancy, solemnity or terror: a fancy of exuberance literally unexampled." This is more applicable to Carlyle than to any other English writer.

Though Carlyle's humour, and his style, remind one of Richter, it is not to be assumed that there was any imitation. Before he was able to read German he had passed the age of susceptibility to example.

The essay is one of the shortest that Carlyle ever wrote, and one of the best. The manner is respectful to the reader, whose goodwill is desired, and obtained. The excellence of the paper on Richter induced Jeffrey to publish in the *Edinburgh Review*, October 1827, a long article by Carlyle on "The State of German Literature."

In Carlyle's opinion the best German poets may be associated with "the Masters of Art, the Saints of Poetry, long since departed." With this "divine spirit" German poetry was "above the existing poetry of any other nation"; it contained "glimpses of that serene soul, that calm harmonious strength, that smiling earnestness, that Love and Faith and Humanity of nature. . . . For these men have not only the clear eye, but the loving heart."

He then discusses the charge brought against the

Germans of being mystics. He admits that there is some truth in it. "It is a fault, but one hardly separable from the excellences we admire most in them. A simple, tender and devout nature, seized by some touch of divine truth, and of this perhaps under some rude enough symbol, is rapt with it into a whirlwind of unutterable thoughts; wild gleams of splendour dart to and fro in the eye of the seer, but the vision will not abide with him, and yet he feels that its light is light from heaven, and precious to him beyond all price."

Carlyle was himself a mystic, one who prefers feeling to reason, who lightens his darkness with the sparks of intuition.

This essay contains the first reference by Carlyle to Fichte's "Divine Idea," which figured so often afterwards in his early writings. "According to Fichte, there is a 'Divine Idea' pervading the visible Universe; which visible Universe is indeed but its symbol and sensible manifestation, having in itself no meaning, or even true existence independent of it. To the mass of men this Divine Idea of the world lies hidden: yet to discern it, to seize it, is the only condition of all genuine virtue, knowledge, freedom; and the end, therefore, of all spiritual effort in every age."

Fichte in *Das Wesen des Gelehrten*, says, "There is something higher, which lies concealed behind all natural appearance. This concealed foundation of all appearance may, in its greatest universality, be aptly named *The Divine Idea*."

The readers of the *Edinburgh Review* did not appreciate Carlyle's Germanism. He had to find another market. Fortunately a new periodical, the *Foreign Review*, just then was founded, in which he obtained publication of his German work.

Essays on Goethe's *Helena*, and on Goethe, appeared in April and July 1828. The former contains a fine description of the characters of Mephistopheles and Faust. In the essay on Goethe the task of criticism is shirked. "There certainly seem," says the cautious Scotsman, "few

literary questions of our time so perplexed, dubious, perhaps hazardous, as this of the character of Goethe." He keeps telling us that he will not venture the hazard. "We speak not of its literary merits," he says, of the *Dichtung und Wahrheit.* "On the literary merit and meaning of *Wilhelm Meister* we have already said that we must not enter at present." "Of Goethe's dramatic, lyrical, didactic poems, in their thousand-fold expressiveness, for they are full of expressiveness, we can here say nothing." On many other aspects of his subject Carlyle informs the reader that he will not speak. Phrases such as the following occur: "To answer these questions, to begin the answer of them, would lead us very far beyond our present limits." "These things can be but imperfectly stated here." "We shall not for the present attempt discussing."[1] This was one of Carlyle's most effective mannerisms, which gave the impression that he had vast stores of profound knowledge in reserve to fall back upon.

Though Jeffrey would not admit any more of Carlyle's German essays into the *Edinburgh Review*, he published, in December 1828, an essay on Burns. Before printing it he wrote to Carlyle that while it "contained much beauty and felicity of diction," it was long and diffuse; German influence had made Carlyle "verbose and prone to exaggeration. There are strong symptoms of both in your Burns. I have tried to staunch the first, but the latter is in the grain, and we must risk the wonder and the ridicule it may bring on us." Jeffrey cut down the article. He wrote afterwards to his successor, McVey Napier, 7th February, 1832: "Carlyle will not do, if you do not take the liberties and pains I did by striking out freely and writing in occasionally."[2] Jeffrey always contended that the superiority of the paper on Burns was due to the editorial pruning it had received. It is probable, also, that Carlyle, when writing for Jeffrey, to be re-introduced into the *Edinburgh Review* after the dislike exhibited by the

[1] See also pp. 198, 209, 224, 244, Centenary Edition.
[2] *Correspondence of McVey Napier*, p. 126.

Review's readers for his " German literature," did his best to staunch his verbosity and curb his exaggeration.

The subject appealed to him in a peculiar degree, for his own position was still much like that of Burns. What with Jeffrey's pruning, Carlyle's desire to propitiate his friendly critic, and his natural sympathy with his fellow countryman of genius, the essay is among Carlyle's best.

He begins with a statement which is open to criticism : " If an individual is really of consequence enough to have his life and character recorded for public remembrance, we have always been of opinion that the public ought to be made acquainted with all the inward springs and relations of his character. Few individuals, indeed, can deserve such a study ; and many *lives* will be written, and, for the gratification of innocent curiosity, ought to be read and forgotten, which are not in this sense *biographies*. But Burns, if we mistake not, is one of these individuals."

But surely every man deserves the study of a biographer. At least as much, perhaps even more, is to be learned from the ordinary as from the extraordinary. If the physician were to confine his attention to exceptional persons, he would learn very little of the nature of man.

Owing to the circumstances of his life, Burns never produced the best that was in him. " Shrouded in such baleful vapours, the genius of Burns was never seen in clear azure splendour. . . . He was a born poet. . . . Nature, after all, is still the grand agent in making poets. . . . Let but the true poet be given us, we repeat it, place him where and how you will, and true poetry will not be wanting. . . . All that remains of Burns, the writings he has left seem to us no more than a poor mutilated fraction of what was in him."

Carlyle entertained the common belief that a born poet, " impelled," as he puts it, " by the expansive movement of his own irrepressible soul," will produce true poetry in spite of all obstacles, though he may be so obstructed that his real capacity is never shown. But if the born poet is sensitive to obstruction it is not probable that he is irrepressible.

" And so kind and warm a soul ; so full of inborn riches, of love to all living and lifeless things ! How his heart flows out in sympathy over universal Nature ; and in her bleakest provinces discerns a beauty and a meaning ! The ' Daisy ' falls not unheeded under his ploughshare ; nor the ruined nest of that ' wee, cowering timorous beastie,' cast forth, after all its provident pains, to ' thole the sleety dribble and cranreuch cauld.' "

The quotations are, as is usual with Carlyle, incorrect. Burns wrote : " Wee, sleekit, cow'rin, tim'rous beastie ; " and " To thole the winter's sleety dribble."[1] One is reminded of another inaccurate quotation by Carlyle from the same poem, when he made Burns write the impossible line, " the best concerted schemes o' mice an' men."

" The excellence of Burns is, indeed, among the rarest, whether in poetry or prose ; but, at the same time, it is plain and easily recognised : his *Sincerity*, his indisputable air of Truth. Here are no fabulous woes or joys ; no hollow fantastic sentimentalities ; no wiredrawn refinings, either in thought or feeling ; the passion that is traced before us has glowed in a living heart ; the opinion he utters has risen in his own understanding, and been a light to his own steps. He does not write from hearsay, but from sight and experience ; it is the scenes that he has lived and laboured amidst, that he describes : those scenes, rude and humble as they are, have kindled beautiful emotions in his soul, noble thoughts, and definite resolves ; and he speaks forth what is in him, not from any outward call of vanity or interest, but because his heart is too full to be silent. He speaks it with such melody and modulation as he can ; ' in homely rustic jingle ' : but it is his own and genuine. This is the grand secret for finding readers and retaining them : let him who would move and convince others, be first moved and convinced himself. . . . Let a man but speak forth with genuine earnestness the

[1] Many years ago, a schoolfellow of the author, who was reciting the line, was severely punished by the master, T. E. Brown (himself a poet of considerable reputation), for saying, with Carlyle, timorous. What would have happened to him if he had omitted " sleekit," and proceeded to " cowering " is better not thought of.

thought, the emotion, the actual condition of his own heart ; and other men, so strangely are we all knit together by the tie of sympathy, must and will give heed to him."

Leaving the writer, Carlyle then examines the man : " But to leave the mere literary character of Burns, which has already detained us too long. Far more interesting than any of his written works, as it appears to us, are his acted ones : the Life he willed and was fated to lead among his fellow men. . . . It is not chiefly as a poet, but as a man, that he interests and affects us."

At Edinburgh Burns was " welcomed as in a triumph, and with universal blandishment and acclamation." He was flattered, and " this winter did him great and lasting injury. From this time a jealous indignant fear of social degradation takes possession of him . . . his heart is now maddened still more with the fever of worldly Ambition . . . the old grudge against Fortune's inequality awoke with new bitterness. . . . Poetry was the celestial element of his new being, and should have been the soul of his whole endeavours : but to divide his hours between poetry and rich men's banquets was an ill-starred and inauspicious attempt. How could he be at ease at such banquets ? " It is curious to read this, when one remembers that Carlyle himself became a frequenter of rich men's houses.

He thought that Burns was ruined by fame, by the poisonous breath of fashion, the disease which he had already diagnosed in the case of Edward Irving. Of Irving we shall speak later ; also of Carlyle himself when the sirens called to him.

With regard to the moral character of Burns he says : " The world is habitually unjust in its judgments of such men. . . . Not the few inches of deflection from the mathematical orbit, which are so easily measured, but the *ratio* of these to the whole diameter, constitutes the real aberration. This orbit may be a planet's, its diameter the breadth of the solar system; or it may be a city hippodrome, nay the circle of a gin-house, its diameter a score of feet or paces. But the inches of deflection only are

measured : and it is assumed that the diameter of the gin-house, and that of the planet, will yield the same ratio when compared with them. Here lies the root of many a blind, cruel condemnation of Burnses, Swifts, Rousseaus, which one never listens to with approval."

Sins, says Carlyle, should be measured according to the size of the perpetrator. A big man may commit a big sin. Carlyle's influence has been hurtful in this direction. The truth is that the greater the man the greater is the sin, and the more injurious the example.

It may be questioned whether an examination of the life of a poet will help us to understand his poetry. The personality of the poet is apt to intrude, and distract the attention. The judgment may be disturbed by what we think we know of Shelley and Byron, and assisted by our ignorance of Homer and Shakespeare. Recent inventions which have given us music without the physical presence of the performer, have raised the standard of musical appreciation.

A hundred years ago the literary critic thought more of the form than of the matter. Carlyle held that we should consider first the inward spirit of an author. " We have not *read* an author," he said, " till we have seen his object, whatever it may be, as *he* saw it." But his congenital exaggeration led him to convert this admirable principle into a criticism based upon the private life and the physical appearance of an author. He would judge a man's worth by reading anecdotes about him, and gazing at his lineaments in an old print.

Here it may be appropriate to consider, out of its chronological order, Carlyle's essay on Scott, written ten years later, in London, in 1838. If the paper on Burns was perhaps Carlyle's best, that on Scott was not far from his worst. For it is dominated throughout by the thought of the pecuniary rewards obtained by Scott. " His life was worldly ; his ambitions were worldly. There is nothing spiritual in him ; all is economical, material, of the earth earthy." His conquests " are reckonable in good metallic coin of the realm." He wrote " daily with the ardour

of a steam-engine, that he might make £15,000 a year and buy upholstery with it." In Carlyle's opinion "the great fact about the Waverley Novels is, that they were faster written and better paid for than any other books in the world." Scott's career was, "writing impromptu novels to buy farms with." Even his struggle to pay off his debts by writing is censured. We may conclude that if Burns had been born in good circumstances and had earned a fortune, and Scott had been poor and had been ill-rewarded, Carlyle would have spoken quite differently of Burns and of Scott.

After Burns, Carlyle wrote about a very different man, Voltaire.

"It is a high, solemn, almost awful thought for every individual man, that his earthly influence, which has had a commencement, will never through all ages, were he the very meanest of us, have an end! What is done is done; has already blended itself with the boundless, ever-living, ever-working Universe, and will also work there, for good or for evil, openly or secretly, throughout all time." Voltaire had not a due sense of this truth, of the responsibility of life, owing to his "inborn levity of nature, his entire want of Earnestness. . . . Reverence, the highest feeling that man's nature is capable of, the crown of his whole moral manhood, and precious, like fine gold, were it in the rudest forms, he seems not to understand, or to have heard of even by credible tradition. . . . 'The Divine Idea, that which lies at the bottom of Appearance,' was never more invisible to any man. He reads History, not with the eye of a devout seer, or even of a critic; but through a pair of mere anti-catholic spectacles. . . . He is no great man, but only a great *Persifleur*; a man for whom life, and all that pertains to it, has, at best, but a despicable meaning; who meets its difficulties, not with earnest force, but with gay agility; and is found always at the top, less by power in swimming, than by lightness in floating"

The greater part of the essay is concerned with Voltaire the man, his method of life, his friends and enemies, his

financial transactions, his Madame du Chatelet, and other domesticities. After a few sentences—all that he can spare, in his seventy-two pages, for a discussion of the writings of Voltaire—Carlyle continues: "It is nowise as a Poet, Historian or Novelist, that Voltaire stands so prominent in Europe; but chiefly as a religious Polemic, as a vehement opponent of the Christian faith. . . . He warred against Christianity, without understanding beyond the mere superficies what Christianity was."

The encyclopædists are attacked: "What Plough or Printing-Press, what Chivalry or Christianity, nay, what Steam-Engine, or Quakerism, or Trial by Jury, did these Encyclopædists invent for mankind? They invented simply nothing: not one of man's virtues, not one of man's powers, is due to them."

These men invented encyclopædism, that is, they worked for the advancement of knowledge; we owe them a great debt of gratitude, for we are now enjoying the benefit of what they did.

The essay concludes with a small meed of praise. "That with all his evil, he" (Voltaire) "has already accomplished good, must be admitted in the soberest calculation. How much do we include in this little word: He gave the death-stab to modern superstition! *That* horrid incubus, which dwelt in darkness, shunning the light, is passing away; with all its rocks, and poison-chalices, and foul sleeping-draughts, is passing away without return. It was a most weighty service." One wonders how a *persifleur*, with his inborn levity of nature, could have achieved it.

"If we enumerate his generous acts, from the case of the Abbé Desfontaines down to that of the widow Calas, and the serfs of Saint Claude, we shall find that few private men have had so wide a circle of charity, and have watched over it so well." His motive was "love of reputation." The most to be said was that "he still had a fellow-feeling for human sufferings; and delighted, were it only as an honest luxury, to relieve them." This is a mean and grudging tribute.

"Wrongdoing and injustice were not simple words on

the lips of Voltaire," says Morley, "they went as knives to the heart; he suffered with the victim, and consumed with an active rage against the oppressor." Morley asks this question: "Who has not been touched by that immortal word of his, of the three years in which he laboured without remission for justice to the widow and descendants of Calas: '*During that time not a smile escaped me without my reproaching myself for it, as for a crime*'" (Morley's italics).

Who has not been touched? Carlyle.

Voltaire spent the later years of his life in a noble crusade of compassion; he was the champion of mankind against despotism in all its forms, and particularly against the crushing of independence of thought, the fettering of the human intellect. He fought, not merely against superstition, but for the right of every man to use his own mind in his own way. It is a grave blot on Carlyle that he should have attributed these strenuous efforts to nothing but vanity. One sentence at the end of the seventy-two pages, acknowledging his fight against superstition, is not an adequate expression of the enormous debt of mankind to Voltaire for the great advance he succeeded in obtaining towards the freedom of the mind from tyrannical persecution. Voltaire believed in human nature; he lived in an age of sanguine hopes, which he himself had done much to inspire. Carlyle was as cold as stone towards all this. The enthusiastic aspirations and efforts of Voltaire he regarded with dislike and suspicion; they seemed to him to be founded on sentimental philanthropy of a self-conscious kind; at best they were nothing but a luxury, a self-righteous charity, carefully "watched over" lest it overflow.

The next essay was Carlyle's first incursion into political philosophy. His "Signs of the Times" was published in the *Edinburgh Review* in June 1829.

He begins by observing that there always have been pessimists who have insisted "that the country was wrecked, and fast sinking; whereas, up to this date, the country is entire and afloat!" He ends also on this

cheerful note, declaring that things are improving and will continue to improve.

He describes the age in which he lived as " the Mechanical Age. It is the Age of Machinery, in every outward and inward sense of that word." The great industrial revolution was in progress which substituted factory labour for individual effort. " On every hand, the living artisan is driven from his workshop to make room for a speedier, inanimate one." This change affected thought and conduct in all directions. " Not the external and physical alone is now managed by machinery, but the internal and spiritual also. . . . Our whole metaphysics itself, from Locke's time downwards, has been physical ; not a spiritual philosophy, but a material one. . . . Our continental neighbours have gone still further. One of their philosophers has lately discovered, that 'as the liver secretes bile, so does the brain secrete thought.' " One of them had declared that " Poetry and Religion (and it is really worth knowing) are a product of the smaller intestines."

To *Mechanics* Carlyle opposes *Dynamics*, which " treats of and practically addresses, the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of Love and Fear, and Wonder, of Enthusiasm, Poetry, Religion, all which have a truly vital and infinite character. . . . It is certain that in former times the wise men, the enlightened lovers of their kind, who appeared generally as Moralists, Poets or Priests, did, without neglecting the Mechanical province, deal chiefly with the Dynamical ; applying themselves chiefly to regulate, increase and purify the inward primary powers of man.

" The truth is, men have lost their belief in the Invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the visible ; or, to speak it in other words : this is not a Religious age. Only the material, the immediately practical, not the divine and spiritual, is important to us. The infinite, absolute character of Virtue has passed into a finite, conditional one ; it is no longer a worship of the Beautiful and Good ; but a calculation of the Profitable. Worship, indeed, in any sense, is not recognised among us, or is mechanically

explained into Fear of pain, or Hope of pleasure. Our true Deity is Mechanism. It has subdued external Nature for us, and we think it will do all things."

If the criticism was to some extent just, it was also narrow. Some people, no doubt, thought too much of the mechanical achievements of the day. But machinery has other than physical effects. Sympathy, understanding, world-fellowship, are encouraged by telegraphs and telephones, trains and trams. The Mechanical is Dynamical. The great throbbing engine, the wireless receiver, arouse wonder and reverence.

The next essay was on the German mystic, Novalis, in the *Foreign Review* July, 1829. It begins with the remark that the works of Novalis form " A Book demanding, whether deserving or not, to be oftener read than almost any other it has ever been our lot to examine. . . . It may be asserted that no good Book, or good thing of any sort, shows its best face at first ; nay, that the commonest quality in a true work of Art, if its excellence have any depth and compass, is that at first sight it occasions a certain disappointment ; perhaps even, mingled with its undeniable beauty, a certain feeling of aversion."

This belief was prevalent in the cottages of Ecclefechan. It was held that nothing good was obtainable, or ought to be desired, except after long and painful effort. Pleasure was sinful ; misery—or, to put it dramatically, sorrow—was a sign of grace. If a thing was done easily it could not have been worth doing. Hence it was natural to suppose that obscurity in a writer indicated that there lay a diamond beneath the roughness. It was that obscurity in Novalis that constituted the " demand " for notice.

Tieck and Schlegel, who were friends of Novalis, edited what he had written, but had not published, when he died of consumption, at the age of twenty-nine. After quoting a long passage, Carlyle says, " perhaps these wonderful paragraphs, which look, at this distance, so like chasms filled with mere sluggish mist, might prove valleys, with a clear stream and soft pastures, were we near at hand.

For one thing, either Novalis, with Tieck and Schlegel at his back, are men in a state of derangement ; or there is more in Heaven and Earth than has been dreamt of in our Philosophy."

According to the " more things in heaven and earth, Horatio ! " school, to which Carlyle belonged, we should not judge of one thing, because we do not understand another. There are unsolvable mysteries, therefore we must believe what is incredible. When reason fails let us fall back on intuition—a kind of animal instinct. These two principles, the " rough diamond " and the " more things in heaven and earth," Carlyle had acquired in his youth. He was a devoted adherent and a zealous propagator of the errors which they contain.

One of the off-shoots of the " rough diamond " theory was, in Carlyle, a deficient appreciation of feminine qualities. At the age of twenty-two, Novalis fell in love with a girl aged thirteen, but she died two days after her fifteenth birthday. Tieck declared that this event changed the mind and character of Novalis, and he quoted letters written by Novalis which support the statement. According to Tieck, from this time " Life became for him " (Novalis) " a glorified Life ; and his whole being melted away as into a bright, conscious vision of a higher Existence. From the sacredness of Sorrow, from heartfelt love and the pious wish for death, his temper and all his conceptions are to be explained."

Carlyle would not accept this. He wrote : " That the whole philosophical and moral existence of such a man as Novalis should have been shaped and determined by the death of a young girl, almost a child, specially distinguished, so far as is shown, by nothing save her beauty—which at any rate must have been very shortlived—will doubtless seem to everyone a singular concatenation . . . surely it appears unjust to represent Novalis as so pliant in the hands of Accident ; a mere pipe for Fortune to play tunes on ; and which sounded a mystic, deep, almost unearthly melody, simply because a young woman was beautiful and mortal." On another page Carlyle censured Novalis

for " peculiar views . . . of the most original and extraordinary character. He asks, for instance, with scientific gravity, whether anyone, that recollects the first kind glance of her he loved, can doubt the possibility of Magic?"

Novalis considered love, enthusiasm, chivalry to be magical, not calculable, a sentiment which Carlyle applauded when it was not applied to love for a girl. The inference must be that though Carlyle had loved Jane Welsh, and loved her still, he had never been in love. Perhaps he was too self-centred. For sentimental feelings he had an abhorrence. He enjoyed sneering at Petrarch, with his Laura. The reference to Dante and Beatrice, in " Heroes," is far from enthusiastic.

The essay contains Carlyle's views on the transcendental philosophy. " The Idealist boasts that his Philosophy is Transcendental, that is, ' ascending *beyond* the senses ' ; which, he asserts, *all* Philosophy, properly so called, by its nature is and must be : and in this way he is led to various unexpected conclusions. To a transcendentalist, Matter has an existence, but only as a Phenomenon ; were *we* not there, neither would it be there." Carlyle then discusses the philosophy of Kant, without much understanding of the subject.[1]

Early in 1830 the *Foreign Review* came to an end. Carlyle worked at a *History of German Literature*, only to find that no publisher would accept the book. Fortunately *Fraser's Magazine* just then began its career, and Fraser believed in Carlyle. Portions of the projected *History* were sent to Fraser, who published them in the Magazine. In March 1831 appeared an article on Schiller.

There is much in it concerning the correspondence between Goethe and Schiller, not as to the contents of the letters, but with regard to the significance and nature of the friendship between the two men. " To enter further on the merits and special qualities of these Letters, which,

[1] " Carlyle's sketch of the Kantian Philosophy is a travesty of the original ; his version of Kant's distinction between understanding and reason would have been vehemently repudiated by Kant ; it was what he, in the *Life of Sterling* called ' Coleridgean Moonshine ' " (*Carlyle and his German Masters*, by C. E. Vaughan, 1910).

on all hands, will be regarded as a publication of real value, both intrinsic and extrinsic, is not our task now. . . . To British readers, the chief object is not the Letters, but the Writers of them."

In this essay Carlyle expressed, for the first time, his Hero doctrine. " Great men are the Fire-pillars in this dark pilgrimage of mankind ; they stand as heavenly Signs, ever living witnesses of what has been, prophetic tokens of what may still be, the revealed, embodied Possibilities of human nature ; which greatness he who has never seen, or rationally conceived of, and with his whole heart passionately loved and reverenced, is himself for ever doomed to be little."

Goethe declared that you could see that Schiller was a great man, from his every movement, even from his manner of cutting his nails. That was the common view, that genius is a God-given inspiration ; that a man so endowed is divine and cannot divest himself of his divinity, which permeates his whole being and streams forth from him in dazzling radiance. Such ideas are vestigial remains of barbarous superstitions. To their continued existence are due many of the profound mistakes which still infect biography and history, and the whole study of man, his inheritance and his acquirement. Men of genius are not a species distinct from the rest of mankind. Genius is a characteristic, not a character ; a feature, not an essence.

In an article on " German Literature of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries " Carlyle speaks of the fable of *Reineke Fuchs* as " the most poetical and meritorious production of our Western World in that kind ; or perhaps of the whole world." Carlyle was much influenced by the tale of Reynard the Fox, to which his attention had been drawn by the discovery that Goethe had written a version of it. He called it a " wild Parody of Human Life . . . not without its meaning and moral." It was while his mind was still under the influence of " Reineke Fuchs " that, as soon as the essay was finished, Carlyle began to write *Sartor Resartus*. In his diary he wrote, " there is hardly any book in the world that has sunk into me as *Reineke*

Fuchs. It co-operates with other tendencies. Perhaps my whole speculation about clothes arose out of that."

He concluded in the hopeful vein which characterised his early writings. "Doubtless the day is coming when Fancy, Humour, Imagination, wherein lie the main elements of spiritual life, will no longer be left uncultivated. . . . Of which glorious consummation there is the finest ulterior certainty, but, for the present, only faint prospects and far-off indications. Time brings Roses!"

CHAPTER XII

"SARTOR RESARTUS"

IN September 1830 Carlyle began work upon the most characteristic of all his writings, *Sartor Resartus*. It was printed, in eight parts, in *Fraser's Magazine*, beginning in November 1833.

The book is supposed to be derived from a German work written by Professor Teufelsdröckh of Weissnichtwo (Know-not-where) on *Clothes, their Origin and Influence*, published by Stillschweigen & Co. (Silence & Co). The Editor (Carlyle) says that he received his copy from Teufelsdröckh, an acquaintance of his in Germany. Hofrath Heuschrecke (Councillor Grasshopper) sent the Editor particulars about Teufelsdröckh's life and character. As the letters of John Carlyle from Germany had much to do with the genesis of *Sartor*, and his brother seemed to Carlyle to have some grasshopper tendencies, we may perhaps recognise in him the original of the Hofrath.

The title is forbidding and strange. "Sartor" may still be seen above a tailor's shop in Scotland. By "the tailor retailored" Carlyle refers to his editing of the book on clothes. Teufelsdröckh is the German for Devil's Dung, the vulgar name for the drug assafœtida. "I sometimes think," wrote Carlyle, "the book *will* prove a kind of medicinal *assafœtida* for the pudding stomach of England, and produce new secretions there."

The title of the book was not more extraordinary than the contents. Mrs. Carlyle said to her husband, "it is a work of Genius, dear." On that all are agreed. It is one of the most remarkable books in the English language, both in conception and in execution. The style is, for the first time, Carlylese.

This was Carlyle's first original book, for the *Life of Schiller* was little more than a compilation. He let himself go. He wrote now just as he talked. That was, indeed, his avowed aim. He said that he never read a book "where the writing seems to flow along like talk (certainly not 'too full') without a certain pain, a certain envy. . . . Truly I feel like one that was bursting with meaning, that had no utterance for it, that would and must get one." So what he gives is talk that seems to be bursting with meaning. It is exuberant, ejaculatory, with a wealth of metaphor and imagery, and a humour which is often grotesque. The speaker is stimulating and impressive, touching the finer sensibilities of his audience. Sometimes he surprises more than he convinces, and occasionally there is a threatening gesture, the schoolmaster's cane being brought into view.

There was a desire to stir and startle, and a tendency to extravagance, acquired from his father. When asked as to the origin of his style, he would say that whoever had heard his father talk would not need to enquire. After his father's influence, he said, came that of Edward Irving; but the intimacy with Irving began at Kirkcaldy, when Carlyle was close on twenty-one years of age, too late for his method of speech to be radically altered. If he spoke like Irving the explanation would be that he and Irving were reared in the same part of Scotland. The knowledge of German came even later, when Carlyle had reached the age of twenty-four. The German expressions are not essential to the style.

Occasionally Carlyle becomes wild, forced, fantastic. In reply to objections he said, "If one has thoughts not hitherto uttered in English books, I see nothing for it but you must use words *not* found there, must *make* words, with moderation and discretion of course." The thoughts themselves were not new, as he imagined. "The poor people seem to think a style can be put off or put on, not like a skin, but like a coat." The example of Carlyle himself proves that they were right. For he had two styles, one for magazine articles, to pass the scrutiny of an

editor, avoiding whatever might be considered outrageous ; this he employed both before and after *Sartor*, until he had become famous and could impose his will on the public. The other was the style of *Sartor* and the *French Revolution*. Here he was not writing so much as haranguing. The voice is raised to far-reaching tones ; there is an evident desire to attract attention, by means of exclamations, and gesticulations, of an extravagant, arresting, melodramatic intenseness. Carlyle believed that he had something very important, and wholly original, to say, " a message from the Eternal," and was determined that men should hear it.

He exercised a great influence upon English literature. He encouraged freedom, natural expression ; he showed what could be done with the English language, by courage and indifference to forms, by the use of plain colloquial language, regardless of all standards and conventions ; he gave to writing the ease and fluency of good talk, without any pedantries about grammar or tautology. One of the consequences is the growth of a careless slovenliness in composition.

The views propounded in this book were led up to in three of the essays which had preceded it. In " Signs of the Times " Carlyle attacked materialism ; in " Novalis " he spoke of the mystic, for whom the unseen is the actual ; in " German Literature of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries " he expounded the allegory of Reinecke Fuchs, human passions under the skin of an animal. Now he enlarges upon these ideas, that the spiritual is the real, that life is mystery, that external phenomena are the clothing of the inner spirit.

He begins with a declaration which is disquieting : " Truth is our divinity. In our historical and critical capacity we hope we are strangers to all the world ; have feud or favour with no one—save indeed the Devil, with whom, as with the Prince of Lies and Darkness we do at all times wage internecine war. This assurance, at an epoch when puffery and quackery have reached a height unexampled in the annals of mankind, and even English

Editors, like Chinese Shopkeepers, must write on the door-lintels *No cheating here*—we thought it good to premise."

What is this but puffery? Whether it is quackery also may perhaps be disputed; but the man who advertises so noisily his devotion to truth becomes suspect at once; he seems to be protesting too much.

In his first book an author writes, usually, about himself. Teufelsdröckh is obviously Carlyle. Here is Carlyle's description of himself, at the age of thirty-five. "Under those thick locks of thine, so long and lank, over-lapping roof-wise the gravest face we ever in this world saw, there dwelt a most busy brain. . . . The secrets of man's life were laid open to thee; thou sawest into the mystery of the Universe farther than another." Carlyle was quite sure that he had probed into mysteries which were unrevealed to the rest of mankind. It was this complete self-confidence that impressed his audience.

Teufelsdröckh's house "might truly be called the pinnacle of Weissnichtwo, for it rose sheer above the contiguous roofs, themselves rising from elevated ground." He looked down upon the inhabitants. "That living flood, pouring through those streets, of all qualities and ages, knowest thou whence it is coming, whither it is going? *Aus der Ewigkeit zu der Ewigkeit hin*: from Eternity onwards to Eternity! These are Apparitions; what else? Are they not Souls rendered visible: in Bodies, that took shape and will lose it, melting into air? Their solid pavement is a Picture of the Sense; they walk on the bosom of Nothing, blank Time is behind them and before them. . . . But I, mein Werter, sit above it all; I am alone with the stars."

To look down upon his fellow creatures had long been the habit of Carlyle, as was natural in the case of an eldest son who had been educated above the standard of his family and neighbours.

The solitude of Craigenputtock, with its inevitable dreams and fancies, was a natural breeding-ground for the production of this book. The feeling of isolation may

produce the habit of gazing through the shows and vestures. The trick of doing so with regard to human beings became actually embarrassing to Carlyle, until the phase passed off when he left Craigenputtock to live in a London crowd.

He describes his own laugh. Of Teufelsdröckh he says that "once we saw him laugh. A light kindled in our Professor's eyes and face, a beaming, mantling, loveliest light; through those murky features, a radiant, ever-young Apollo looked; and he burst forth like the neighing of all Tattersall's—tears streaming down his cheeks, pipe held aloft, foot clutched into the air—loud, long-continuing, uncontrollable; a laugh not of the face and diaphragm only, but of the whole man from head to heel. . . . No man who has once heartily and wholly laughed can be altogether irreclaimably bad. . . . The man who cannot laugh is not only fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils: but his whole life is already a treason and a stratagem."

There is a reference to this passage in the *Reminiscences*, where Carlyle says that it partly describes the laugh of Walter Welsh, his wife's maternal grandfather. There he says also that his father's " still rarer laugh was louder far, though perhaps not more complete," and he speaks of his mother's " beautifully sportive vein," and his wife's " beautiful light of humour." Carlyle himself was a splendid laugher and a cause of laughter in others. Sometimes of an evening, while walking with a friend in King Street, or Sloane Street, he would hold on to a lamp post and make the night ring with his boisterous merriment; and many a roar did his eccentric speech produce from those who heard him.

In the chapter headed " The World in Clothes," Carlyle embarks upon his subject. He asserts again the " more things in heaven and earth " principle, and attacks the " professed Enemies to Wonder." In all things there is " an incessant, indubitable, though infinitely complex working of Cause and Effect. But, let any Cause-and-Effect Philosopher explain, not why I wear such and such a Garment, obey such and such a Law; but even why *I* am *here*, to wear and obey anything! . . . Wonder is

the basis of worship . . . that progress of Science, which is to destroy Wonder, and in its stead substitute Mensuration and Numeration, finds small favour with Teufelsdröckh, much as he otherwise venerates these two latter processes. . . . The man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship), were he President of innumerable Royal Societies, and carried the whole *Mécanique Celeste* and *Hegel's Philosophy*, and the epitome of all Laboratories and Observatories with their results, in his single head,—is but a Pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye." Attempts at explanation of nature are "hypothetical, ineffectual, and even impertinent."

But the searcher into nature is inspired by Wonder. He desires to discover the laws which govern the Universe, because he believes in the existence of a guiding influence.

"With men of a speculative turn there come seasons, meditative, sweet, yet awful hours, when in wonder and fear you ask yourself that unanswerable question: Who am I: the thing that can say 'I' (*das Wesen das sich ICH nennt*)? The world with its loud trafficking, retires into the distance; and . . . you are alone with the Universe, and silently commune with it, as one mysterious Presence with another. . . . So that this so-solid-seeming World, after all, were but an air-image, our ME the only reality."

Many persons have at some time in their lives experienced a self-consciousness so extreme that it seems as if our own person is the only reality; that nothing else exists; that the world is merely a scene which will vanish when we cease to observe it; hence, that one's own death, and the world going on afterwards, is inconceivable. "You cannot imagine yourself dead," said Tennyson to G. H. Lewes. The author of a *History of Philosophy* made no reply.

Carlyle's remarks on Space and Time are not in accord with modern thought. "Fortunatus had a wishing Hat, which when he put on, and wished himself Anywhere, behold he was there. By this means had Fortunatus triumphed over Space, he had annihilated Space; for him

there was no Where, but all was Here." Fortunatus had triumphed over Time, not Space; he had not annihilated Space any more than the telegraph does.

He speaks of "TIME, and its relation to ETERNITY," and of "The confluence of Time and Eternity, and some gleam of the latter peering through." He says that man stands "in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities. . . . Is not every meanest day the conflux of Eternities?" He speaks of "Man, symbol of Eternity imprisoned into Time." He uses the expressions, "When Eternity ends," when eternity "is done." He exclaims, "*Eternity*; hast thou heard of that? Is that a fact, or is it no fact?"

"To the mediæval thinker," says a modern authority, "Eternity is not endless time . . . Eternity is very nigh at hand, very real and instant in his presence. Already men could believe in it, very shortly they might experience it. When man should see as God sees, then Time would be no more." The religious significance of the doctrine of Eternity, as understood by the Schoolmen, was expressed by Boethius: "That God is eternal is the common judgment of all who enjoy reason. . . . That which embraces and possesses the whole plenitude of unlimited life at once, from which naught of the future is absent, from which naught of the past has flowed away, *that* is rightly deemed eternal."[1]

"To the mediæval thinker," continues Wicksteed, "there was really no progressive development of the world as we conceive it. History was rather a history of corruption and of falling away than a history of progress." Evil was permanent owing to the fall of man from his period of perfection.

These were the doctrines of Carlyle, who remained a child of the Middle Ages.

The "Eternities" and "Infinities" of Carlyle are, at present, outside the range of the human intellect. We may allow ourselves the hope that, if the man of the future

[1] *Studies in Theology: The Religion of Time and the Religion of Eternity*, by P. H. Wicksteed, 1903.

proves as superior to the man of the present, as the best product of our day is to the man of the past, he may, perhaps, be able to understand a beginning and an end, and other things which are now beyond our comprehension.

The clothes philosophy looks "through the Shows, or Vestures, into the Things" themselves. "For Matter, were it never so despicable, is Spirit, the manifestation of Spirit: were it never so honourable, can it be more? The thing Visible, nay the thing Imagined, the thing in any way conceived as Visible, what is it but a Garment, a Clothing of the higher, celestial Invisible? . . . The Universe is one vast symbol of God. . . . All visible things are emblems; what thou seest is not there on its own account; strictly speaking is not there at all: Matter exists only spiritually, and to represent some Idea, and body it forth. Hence Clothes, as despicable as we think them, are so unspeakably significant . . . the whole External Universe and what it holds is but Clothing; and the essence of all Science lies in the Philosophy of Clothes."

Then Carlyle gives the story of his own life. Teufelsdröckh (that is, Carlyle) was an exceptional being; even as a baby he was unusual. "I have heard him noted as a still infant, that kept his mind much to himself; above all, that seldom or never cried. He already felt that time was precious; that he had other work cut out for him than whimpering." When he was older he saw the swallows come, "and all, I chiefly, from the heart loved them." Carlyle felt that he alone was capable of really loving the swallows, that the attention they received from other people was not like his own.

Teufelsdröckh was "a man of genius": he had an "unparalleled psychical mechanism. . . . I was like no other," he says; "my fellows are perhaps not numerous." It was intolerable that a man of such rare abilities should remain obscure and unknown. He complained of "the ring of Necessity whereby we are all begirt." It is the fate of man, and most men accept it with equanimity, but Carlyle regarded every limitation of his freedom as an

assault upon his personal self—even though it came from God.

He describes his childhood, his unhappy school days, his attendance at Edinburgh University, for whose professors he expresses contempt; and the agonies of religious scepticism by which he was assailed. He falls in love with Blumine, in whom we have glimpses of Margaret Gordon and Jane Welsh. Blumine encourages him, but her guardian shuts the door upon him on account of his poverty. There follows a chapter on the " Sorrows of Teufelsdröckh." " The end of Man is an Action, and not a Thought," but Teufelsdröckh is unable to determine in which direction his abilities lie. He is very unhappy; his health breaks down. In " The Everlasting No " Carlyle exclaims: " Is there no God, then; but at best an absentee God, sitting idle ever since the first Sabbath, at the outside of his Universe, and seeing it go? Has the word Duty no meaning; is what we call Duty no divine Message and Guide, but a false earthly Phantasm, made up of Desire and Fear? "

Then he relates the incident (in Leith Walk, Edinburgh) when he resolved not to " pip and whimper " any more; " it is from this hour that I incline to date my Spiritual New-Birth, or Baphometic Fire-Baptism; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a Man." Baphometic was one of Carlyle's strange adjectives; others which occur for the first time in this book are, Thaumaturgic, Trismegistus, Ernulphus-cursing, Rhadamanthine.

He has now brought Teufelsdröckh through his troubles. He has learned to renounce happiness and to strive to do his duty, in accordance with the will of God. " Love not pleasure; love God," he says. " This is the *Everlasting Yea*, wherein all contradiction is solved; wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him." Thus has he attained the calm of philosophy. " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might. Work while it is called to-day; for the Night cometh, wherein no man can work."

In the concluding portion of the book Carlyle applied the

clothes-philosophy to a variety of topics. It was not his aim to give practical advice on concrete problems, but to make people think, and no man ever did that more effectually. Perhaps, after all, that was his chief merit.

He denounced once more those who "in Earth and in Heaven can see nothing but mechanism"; who attempt to "fathom the Doctrine of Motives, and cunningly compute" them. "Yes, Friends, not our Logical, Mensurative faculty, but our Imaginative one is King over us." Carlyle's own mind relied on inspiration, intuition, not on reason. But imagination and intuition are the resources of the savage; it is by means of the intellect, slowly and laboriously set to work, that man has advanced.

"Two men I honour, and no third. First, the toil-worn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. . . . A second man I honour, and still more highly: Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the bread of Life. If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have light, have guidance, Freedom, Immortality?"

There follows a plea for general education, and for assisted emigration, with a demand that those in authority should assist actively. "Call ye that a Society where there is no longer any Social Idea extant; not so much as the Idea of a common Home, but only of a common overcrowded Lodging-house? Where each, isolated, regardless of his neighbour, clutches what he can get, and cries 'Mine!' . . . The poor perishing, like neglected, foundered Draught-Cattle, of Hunger and Overwork; the Rich, still more wretchedly, of Idleness, Satiety and Over-growth." This condition of affairs was brought about, said Carlyle, by the prevailing spirit of *laissez-faire*, which left the poor man without guidance from the rich.

Society, he says, is not an assemblage of units, but an organic community. Religion is the cement of society; without a common belief in God men must remain isolated, hostile to each other. Nature is "not an Aggregate but

a Whole." Men should not regard themselves as separate entities, who come together from gregarious tendencies, but as a society with one life and one spirit. "In vain thou deniest it, thou *art* my Brother. . . . I say, there is not a Red Indian, hunting by Lake Winnipic, can quarrel with his squaw, but the whole world must smart for it; will not the price of beaver rise? It is a mathematical fact that the casting of this pebble from my hand alters the centre of gravity of the Universe."

Then comes a famous passage: "Are we not Spirits, that are shaped into a body, into an Appearance; and that fade away again into air and Invisibility? . . . This is no metaphor, it is a simple scientific fact; we start out of Nothingness, take figure, and are Apparitions; round us, as round the veriest spectre, is Eternity; and to Eternity minutes are years and æons. Come there not tones of Love and Faith, as from celestial harp-strings, like the Song of beautified Souls? And again, do we not squeak and jibber (in our discordant, screech-owlish debatings and recriminatings); and glide bodeful, and feeble, and fearful, or uproar (*poltern*), and revel in our mad Dance of the Dead—till the scent of the morning air summons us to our still Home; and dreamy Night becomes awake and Day? Where now is Alexander of Macedon; does the steel Host, that yelled in fierce battle-shouts at Issus and Arbela, remain behind him; or have they all vanished utterly, even as perturbed Goblins must? Napoleon too, and his Moscow Retreats and Austerlitz Campaigns! Was it all other than the veriest Spectre-hunt; which has now, with its howling tumult that made Night hideous, flitted away? Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand-million walking the Earth openly at noontide; some half-hundred have vanished from it, some half-hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once.

"O Heaven, it is mysterious, it is awful to consider that we not only carry each a future Ghost within him: but are, in very deed, Ghosts! These Limbs, whence had we them; this stormy Force, this life-blood with its burning Passion? They are dust and shadow; a Shadow-system

gathered round our ME; wherein through some moments or years, the Divine Essence is to be revealed in the Flesh. . . . Thus, like a God-created, fire-breathing Spirit-host, we emerge from the Inane; haste stormfully across the astonished Earth: and plunge again into the Inane. Earth's mountains are levelled; and her seas filled up, in our passage: can the Earth which is but dead and a vision, resist Spirits which have reality and are alive? On the hardest adamant some footprint of us is stamped-in; the last Rear of the host will read traces of the earliest Van. But whence? O Heaven, whither? Sense knows not; Faith knows not; only that it is through Mystery to Mystery, from God to God.

> "We *are such stuff*
> As Dreams are made of, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep!"

Sartor Resartus is a poem of self. A soul in anguish seeks to penetrate the mystery of existence. The moral is prose—Do not enquire into the unknowable; do not complain; do your work, in silence; here, or nowhere, is your America. The author gives a cry from the heart, which searches the marrow, not a cold exposition from the intellect. "Nevertheless," says Carlyle of himself in the person of Teufelsdröckh, "wayward as our professor shows himself, is there any reader that can part with him in declared enmity? Let us confess, there is that in the wild, much-suffering much-inflicting man, which almost attaches us." The word "almost" we will certainly strike out.

CHAPTER XIII

"CHARACTERISTICS"

AN essay to which Carlyle gave the title "Characteristics," was written in London in the autumn of 1831, and published in the *Edinburgh Review* in December of that year.

It is a sermon, both in subject and in delivery. The preacher announces his text: "The healthy know not of their health, but only the sick: this is the Physician's Aphorism; and applicable in a far wider sense than he gives it." He proceeds to apply it.

The best work, says Carlyle, is unconscious of itself. "If the Debater and Demonstrator, whom we may rank as the lowest of true thinkers, knows what he has done, and how he did it, the Artist, whom we rank as the highest, knows not; must speak of Inspiration, and in one or the other dialect, call his work the gift of a divinity. But on the whole, 'genius is ever a secret to itself.'"

Genius is no more a secret to itself than are mediocrity and stupidity. Performances which seem to be due to inspiration, may be in fact the result of conscious preparation. Reading and writing are, to the ignorant and uneducated, miraculous, inspired; yet all men are capable of acquiring these arts. Blindfold chess seems uncanny, but it is not so difficult as talking, and listening. As knowledge increases, much that seems to have been due to inspiration becomes explained. "Does the boxer hit better for knowing that he has a *flexor longus* and a *flexor brevis*?" asks Carlyle. Undoubtedly he does. The boxer of our time would make short work of the pugilists of a hundred years ago, precisely because he has learned what are the strong and weak points of his own and his

opponent's anatomy. The inspiration theory of genius is a decaying superstition; though we may define genius as a quality which, until it is studied, *seems* to be inspired.

"Already, to the popular judgment, he who talks much about virtue in the abstract, begins to be suspect; it is shrewdly guessed that where there is great preaching, there will be little almsgiving. . . . Socinian Preachers proclaim 'benevolence' to the four winds, and have *Truth* engraved on their watch-seals: unhappily with little or no effect. Were the limbs in right walking order, why so much demonstrating of motion?" Carlyle's own practice gives point to the argument. He talked much of his devotion to truth.

"So, too, when the generous Affections have become well-nigh paralytic, we have the reign of Sentimentality. The greatness, the profitableness, at any rate the extremely ornamental nature of high feeling, and the luxury of doing good." Carlyle regarded all attempts to "do good," all humanitarian activities, as due to nothing more than unctuous vanity and smug self-satisfaction.

"Here too our old Aphorism holds: that again in the Body Politic, as in the animal body, the sign of right performance is Unconsciousness. . . . Accordingly, it is not in the vigorous ages of a Roman Republic that treatises of the Commonwealth are written: while the Decii are rushing with devoted bodies on the enemies of Rome, what need of preaching Patriotism? The virtue of Patriotism has already sunk from its pristine all-transcendent condition, before it has received a name.

"The state of Society in our days is, of all possible states, the least an unconscious one; this is specially the Era, when all manner of Enquiries into what was once the unfelt, involuntary sphere of man's existence, find their place, and, as it were, occupy the whole domain of thought. What, for example, is all this we hear, for the last generation or two, about the Improvement of the Age, the Spirit of the Age, Destruction of Prejudice, Progress of the Species, and the March of Intellect, but an unhealthy state of self-sentience, self-survey; the precursor and prognostic of

still worse health? That Intellect do march, if possible at double-quick time, is very desirable; nevertheless, why should she turn round at every stride, and cry: See you what a stride I have taken."

An offshoot of Carlyle's aphorism is his denunciation of what he called " view-hunting," by which he means any description of scenery which to his mind may appear to be self-conscious. " Intolerable enough; when every puny whipster plucks out his pencil, and insists on painting you a scene; so that the instant you discern such a thing as ' wavy outline,' ' mirror of the lake,' ' stern headland,' or the like, in any book you tremulously hasten on; and scarcely the Author of Waverley himself can tempt you not to skip."

One cannot admire Carlyle for this. Why trouble about a puny whipster? And if the descriptions of Scott are good, why skip them? Carlyle's touchy vanity was hurt at the suggestion that others besides himself might be capable of appreciating the beauties of nature. He preferred to think that every expression of such appreciation except his own must be self-conscious affectation, " view-hunting " for the sake of effect.

Towards the end he makes this surprising remark. "One great step of progress, for example, we should say, in actual circumstances, was this same; the clear ascertainment that we are in progress." This is a direct contradiction of the whole bent and tenor of the essay. " See you what a stride we have taken," is now his own cry. His object throughout has been to show that consciousness of progress is proof that there is no progress; and he winds up by saying that consciousness of progress is proof that there is progress. He had a chaotic, untutored, mind.

While in London, Carlyle wrote, besides " Characteristics," two other notable essays. In April and May 1832 his articles on " Biography " and on " Boswell's *Life of Johnson* " were published in *Fraser's Magazine*.

" History," said Carlyle, " is the essence of innumerable Biographies." It is, or should be, based upon Realities. " Fiction, while the feigner of it knows that he is feigning,

partakes, more than we suspect, of the nature of *lying*." The biographer is in the superior position that he has facts to deal with ; and any fact is worth more than all fiction. " Let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious* event." Carlyle then takes from Clarendon the story of Charles II after Worcester ; how he sought refuge in a poor man's cottage, where he obtained lodging, and " a piece of bread and a great pot of butter-milk," and then before departing, " changed clothes, down to the very shirt and old pair of shoes, with his landlord." Incidents of this kind interested Carlyle, not only more than any fiction, but above events of much greater importance. It was the everyday, personal element that appealed to him, which he could visualise from his own experience.

He was ever conscious of the reality of the past, which has " the pathos which belongs only to the dead. For the past is all holy to us ; the Dead are all holy, even they that were base and wicked while alive, their baseness and wickedness was not *they*, but the heavy and unmanageable Environment that lay around them, with which they fought unprevailing ; *They* (the ethereal god-given Force that dwelt in them, and was their *Self*) have now shuffled-off that heavy Environment, and are free and pure."

Then he discourses on the " Secret of being ' Graphic ' " : " One grand, invaluable secret there is, however, which includes all the rest, and, what is comfortable, lies clearly in every man's power : *To have an open loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such.* Truly, it has been said, emphatically in these days it ought to be repeated : a loving Heart is the beginning of all Knowledge. This it is that opens the whole mind, quickens every faculty of the intellect to do its fit work, that of *knowing* ; and therefrom, by sure consequence, of *vividly uttering-forth.* Other secret for being ' graphic ' is there none, worth having : but this is an all-sufficient one. . . . It has been said, ' the heart sees farther than the head ' : but, indeed, without the seeing heart, there is no true seeing for the head so much as

possible. . . . You do not use your faculty honestly: your heart is shut up: full of greediness, malice, discontent: so your intellectual sense cannot be open."

The brain cannot work, the eye cannot see, so long as the heart is disturbed by vanity and envy, pose and prejudice.

"Boswell wrote a good Book because he had a heart and an eye to discern Wisdom, and an utterance to render it forth; because of his free insight, his lively talents, above all, of his Love and child-like open-mindedness. . . . Towards Johnson his feeling was not Sycophancy, which is the lowest but Reverence, which is the highest of human feelings. None but a *Reverent* man (which so unspeakably few are) could have found his way from Boswell's environment to Johnson's." This was the answer to Macaulay's assertion that Boswell wrote a good book because he was a fool.

It was Boswell's love and reverence which enabled him to overcome the other weaknesses of his character; his heart was true, and controlled his mind. Here Carlyle's own heart was true. He insisted upon the very important fact that the mind is a reflex of the heart; in other words, that men think what they want to think. *Quod homines volunt id facile credunt.*

Boswell's book was "beyond any other product of the eighteenth century: all Johnson's own Writings, laborious and in their own kind genuine above most, stand on a quite inferior level to it. . . . Which of us but remembers, as one of the sunny spots in his existence, the day when he opened these airy volumes, fascinating him by true natural magic! It was as if the curtains of the past were drawn aside, and we looked mysteriously into a kindred country, where dwelt our Fathers. Inexpressively dear to us, but which had seemed forever hidden from our eyes."

When speaking of Johnson, Carlyle says nothing, beyond the single sentence just quoted, about his writings. In this instance his method was appropriate. Johnson is for us a man, not an author. It is curious to find him given an adjective which afterwards became identified with a very

different person. On a wintry day Johnson's "muddy features grow a purple and sea-green colour."

On the 22nd March, 1832, Goethe died. Carlyle wrote a short article, "The death of Goethe," published in the *New Monthly Magazine* in June, and a longer one, "Goethe's Works," which was published in the *Foreign Quarterly Review* in August. In October and November *Fraser's Magazine* published Carlyle's translations of "The Tale" and "Novelle" by Goethe.

In the first essay, "Death of Goethe," Carlyle expounds the immortality of the great: "The literature of Europe will pass away; Europe itself, the Earth itself will pass away: this little life-boat of an Earth with its noisy crew of Mankind, and all their troubled History will one day have vanished: faded like a cloud-speck from the azure of the All! What, then, is man! What, then, is man! He endures but for an hour, and is crushed before the moth. Yet in the being and in the working of a faithful man is there already (as all faith, from the beginning, gives assurance) a something that pertains not to this wild death-element of time; that triumphs over Time, and *is* and will be, when Time shall be no more."

In another passage he repeats this idea. "Look up, my wearied brother," he says; "see thy fellow workmen there in God's Eternity; surviving there, they alone surviving: sacred Band of the Immortals, celestial Bodyguard of the Empire of Mankind. Even in weak Human Memory they survive so long as saints, as heroes, as gods; they alone surviving; peopling, they alone, the unmeasured solitudes of Time!"

Not a very pleasant sight for the wearied brother.

The longer essay, "Goethe's Works," is disappointing. We are told that "The inward life of Goethe, onward from this epoch lies nobly recorded in the long series of his Writings. Of these, meanwhile, the great bulk of our English world has nowise yet got to such understanding and mastery, that we could with much hope of profit, go into a critical examination of their merits and characteristics." The contention that owing to the general ignorance

of Goethe's writings it was useless to speak of them, was really an excuse for evading an uncongenial task.

The funeral orations over the grave of Goethe being concluded, Carlyle felt that the German vein had been worked out. He turned to France. In April 1833, the *Foreign Quarterly Review* published his long article on Diderot.

He begins with an attack on "Novel-writers and such-like," and prophesies that they will "either retire into nurseries, and work for children, minors and semi-fatuous persons of both sexes; or else, what were far better, sweep their Novel-fabric into the dust-cart, and betake them with such faculty as they have to understand and record what is *true*." This was not a lucky prognostication, for within the next generation appeared the novels of Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontës, George Eliot, Bulwer Lytton, Charles Kingsley, Anthony Trollope, Mrs. Gaskell, Captain Marryat, Disraeli.

On the subject of Diderot's atheism Carlyle says: "Of final causes, man, by the nature of the case, can *prove* nothing; knows them, if he know anything of them, not by glimmering flint-sparks of Logic, but by an infinitely higher sight of *intuition*. . . . Fool! the *Eternal* is no Simulacrum. God is not only There, but Here, or Nowhere, in that life-breath of thine, in that act and thought of thine—and thou wert wise to look to it. . . . Whosoever, in one way or another, recognises not that 'Divine Idea of the world, which lies at the bottom of Appearance,' can rightly interpret no Appearance."

The "famed Encyclopædical Tree" he described as "one of those attempts to parcel-out the invisible mystical Soul of man, with its *infinitude* of phases and character, into shop-lists of what are called 'faculties,' and suchlike." He disliked the principle of the encyclopædia, which seemed to him conceited and irreverent. And, as no two human beings are exactly alike, all cataloguing must be inaccurate. He disliked the idea of being regarded himself as a classifiable person.

The philosophers and encyclopædists were believers in man; they were therefore, according to Carlyle, presumptuous towards God. They were sanguine, hopeful, confident, whereas Carlyle's predominant feeling was fear of retribution. As regards man Carlyle was the Denier, and the eighteenth century was the great period of Belief.

An essay on " Cagliostro " was published, in two parts, in *Fraser's Magazine*, July and August 1833. The subject was well suited to Carlyle's manner. The " Quack of Quacks " gave generous scope for humour, and the opportunity was fully utilised.

Carlyle's first historical writing was an essay, " Diamond Necklace," written in 1833, and published in *Fraser's Magazine* in two parts, December 1836 and February 1837. In literary workmanship " Diamond Necklace " is equal to anything Carlyle wrote. It is a fine essay, though tedious at times, from excessive digressions and moralisings. The events recorded are enclosed, almost hidden, in the folds of seventy-eight pages of discursive commentary. We are introduced to a comedy which ended in the darkest of tragedies, a subject made for Carlyle, with his humour and his dramatic power. One has a feeling that the essay might have been made a perfect gem of art by a little of Jeffrey's friendly surgery.

Carlyle's essays were printed in book form, five volumes, in 1839. They constitute, with *Sartor Resartus*, his best work. There are purple passages in later writings, but it is in the solitude and obscurity of Craigenputtock that the greatness of Carlyle should be sought, not in the ostentations of London.

He came forward as an introducer of Schiller, Goethe, and other German writers. Considering how much he wrote about them, the large space at his disposal, it is surprising how little he has to say in detail about the works of these authors. Even the titles of most of their books are not forthcoming. The reader is told repeatedly that the life of a man of genius is much more interesting than his

writings. It was the spirit in which he worked that mattered, for that emanated from God. The Germans were serious, earnest, sincere, in every sense the antithesis of the French *persifleurs*. They saw and understood what Fichte called the "Divine Idea" of the world, the supernatural visible in the natural. That they were sometimes obscure is proof of their deep meditations, for they had reached thoughts and feelings which transcend the power of expression in words. The Germany extolled by Carlyle, in his early period, was a land of romantic poets, and mystics; the birthplace of much of the folk-lore, the legends, and fairy tales of Europe; the home of philosophy and deep rumination.

Carlyle was not the first English writer to draw attention to the Germans. Scott had translated Bürger's *Lenore*, and Goethe's *Götz von Berlichingen*, Coleridge had translated *Wallenstein*, while Carlyle was still an infant; and other translations and comments appeared before he took pen in hand. But though he was not the first, he became the chief and most influential sponsor of German literature in England.

In all these Craigenputtock utterances Carlyle is speaking from the pulpit, in the manner of a revivalist preacher. The basis of his discourse, whether it be about the Diamond Necklace or the musings of Teufelsdröckh, the humour of Richter or the mysticism of Novalis, the songs of Burns or the persiflage of Voltaire, is—the presence of God. All life, all movement, and consciousness, are evidence of God. All objects, human or other, are informed with the spirit of their Creator. The name of God was constantly on the lips of Carlyle's parents, and was frequently uttered by himself. He had been taught to think of God at all moments of his life. He was in all essentials a devout, religious man of the Annandale pattern. In theory he separated himself from his neighbours by declining to accept the Christian miracles, but the difference was not fundamental, for it was the Old Testament more than the New which ruled the countryside.

He gave literary expression to what he had heard in the

Burgher Chapel at Ecclefechan, and had been taught by his mother. Man is born to sin, and to sorrow; he must conquer self, and renounce the idea of happiness. The talk about progress of the species, the assumptions of science, the enquiries into the motives of conduct, into the causes of things, attempts to "account for" events, are all irreverent to God. There are more things in heaven and earth than are wot of in our philosophy, a fact which the encyclopædists ignored. There is, though they knew it not, an unseen but not unreal world. Modesty is becoming to man. The Time and Space of which he speaks so glibly do not exist, out of his mind. He is himself but a ghost, an apparition, an appearance of God, here for a short space and then gone, in accordance with His inscrutable decree.

No good work can be done without suffering pain. Roughness may conceal a diamond; obscurity is evidence of depth. The polite, agreeable man, is sure to be a feeble person, of no character. Philanthropy is self-conscious, sentimentalism is insincere, descriptions of scenery are affected. Materialism, mechanism, utilitarianism are human conceits insulting to God. In the past there was not this self-conscious self-satisfaction. There was no talk of patriotism in Rome in the great days when the Romans were patriotic. Boswell wrote a good book because he had love and reverence. The heart sees further than the head; intuition is better than calculation.

In this period of Craigenputtock modesty Carlyle wrote as one desiring the appreciation of his readers. His native arrogance was held in check. He presented his case with wonderful efficacy. The literary workmanship is superb. There are times, no doubt, when one is not convinced. There is a persistent exaggeration which occasionally arouses a sense of revolt; and the repetitions, though often effective by their cumulative pressure, may become irritating, or merely tedious. Sometimes it seems as if an exhibition was being given of the number of different ways in which one idea may be expressed. But the serious, impressive tone, the fertility of imagery, the live fellow

man writing about the greatest problems of our existence, "from the heart, and if possible to the heart," as he said in a letter to Goethe, produce an overwhelming effect, at least upon the feelings and the emotions.

CHAPTER XIV

LONDON

THE house in London that Carlyle's residence was to make one of the most honoured, and most sought in England, then No. 5 Cheyne Row, now No. 24, stands in a short street off Cheyne Walk in Chelsea, on the border of the Thames. Cheyne Row was built in the reign of Queen Anne.

Carlyle's house was of the usual London type. On the left of the entrance into a narrow hall was the dining-room (used at first as the drawing-room); it has two windows on to the street; folding-doors open on to a smaller room behind. The stair, with handsome wooden balustrade, leads to a set of rooms corresponding to those below, except that the front room has three windows, being longer than the room below by the width of the hall. There is a second floor, and above it a "sound-proof" room, built in 1853. The kitchen is in a basement, half underground. There is a small, narrow piece of walled-in garden. At the farther end Mrs. Carlyle's little dog, Nero, is buried.

Mrs. Carlyle's health benefited by the change from the monotony of Craigenputtock. She wrote to Miss Hunter, 22nd September, 1835: "Country air and country fare would hardly counterbalance country dullness for me. A little exciting talk is many times, for a person of my temperament, more advantageous to bodily health than either judicious physicking or nutritious diet and good air."

In London she escaped also some of the housework she had been obliged to do. "I am wonderfully well hefted here," she wrote to Mrs. Aitken, "the people are

extravagantly kind to me, and in most respects my situation is out of sight more suitable than it was at Craigenputtock. . . . One comfort is, that I have not to fuddle about myself here, as I used to have with the 'soot-drops' at Craigenputtock; the people actually do their own work, better or worse."

Having emerged from the solitude of Craigenputtock to the crowded streets of London, Carlyle abandoned abstractions for realities. Hitherto his subjects had been religion, philosophy, literature. He was henceforth to deal with history and politics, with the practical world of action. He selected for his first real effort to obtain a popular success one of the most dramatic events in all history—the French Revolution.

He came to London with £200 in his pocket. In August 1834 he received £82 for *Sartor Resartus* which had been published, in parts, in *Fraser's Magazine*. In reserve he had the manuscript of "Diamond Necklace," one of his best pieces, for which he had hitherto failed to find a publisher. Economy of the strictest nature would be necessary if his money was to last until the *French Revolution* was finished. He hoped the work might be done in a year, but three years had elapsed before it was published, in June 1837. Fraser had undertaken to print it at his own expense. If it failed, Carlyle would have to give up the idea of earning his bread as an author.

The farm at Scotsbrig provided some of the supplies for the household at Cheyne Row. "Here is the list of our wants," wrote Carlyle to his mother, "as I have extracted it by questions out of Jane. First, sixty pounds of butter in two equal *pigs* (the butter is 16*d.* a pound !); secondly, a moderately sized sweet-milk cheese; next, two smallish bacon-hams (your beef-ham was just broken into last week, and is in the best condition); next, about fifteen stone of right oatmeal (or even more, for we are to give Hunt some stones of it, and need almost a pound daily: there is not now above a stone left); and after that, as many hundredweights of potatoes as you think will keep (for the rule of it is this: we take two pounds

daily and they sell here at three half-pence, or at lowest a penny a pound, and are seldom good); all this got ready and packed into a hogshead or two will reach us by Whitehaven, and we will see how it answers."

The London butcher had never heard of any ham but a bacon one. The beef-ham daily played its part at breakfast. "We get coffee to breakfast (at eight or nearly so), have very often mutton-chops to dinner at three, then tea at six; we have four penny-worth of cream, two penny-worth of milk daily." Supper at eleven consisted always of porridge.

In 1835 Carlyle received £100 from Mill under circumstances presently to be related. "Diamond Necklace" was published in *Fraser's Magazine* in December 1836, and February 1837, Carlyle receiving £50 for it. "Mirabeau," published by Mill in the *London and Westminster Review*, January 1837, brought another £50, and "Parliamentary history of the French Revolution," in the same review, April 1837, £10 10*s*. These receipts, with £82 for *Sartor*, the £200 he brought with him, and what was paid him for the obituary notice of Irving, amount to a sum of £500, or thereabouts, on which Carlyle and his wife lived in London for nearly three years.

Poor as they were, the Carlyles followed the Scotch custom of making regular payments of small sums, in proportion to their income, to indigent persons who were worthy of support. They interested themselves in the welfare of these humble dependents, giving them both moral and material assistance. When Carlyle became affluent he was a little too indiscriminate in his disbursements, which had become substantial. "His one expensive luxury," said Froude, "was charity."

One of his first visits was to his old friend Irving, now at death's door. The story of Edward Irving is indeed a tragedy. His preaching from 1822 onwards attracted fashionable audiences to the little chapel in Hatton Garden. A new church was built for him in Regent Square, with 1,000 seats, and though fashion left him, the church was always full. His fame was wide; when he

went to Scotland large congregations collected to hear him preach. At Kirkcaldy the galleries were so over-full before the preacher had arrived that they collapsed and many persons were killed in their fall. The attention he obtained convinced Irving that great events were at hand. He began to prophesy the second Advent. He entertained the hope of a message from heaven ; he believed that the spiritual gifts bestowed upon the apostolic age had been kept in abeyance by the absence of faith, and that they would re-appear. Events occurred which seemed to justify his belief. A sick girl, Mary Campbell, in Clydesdale, was visited by the Holy Ghost and constrained to speak in an unknown tongue, with prophetic utterances. Then another woman, at Port Glasgow, was cured of illness by the Holy Ghost, speaking through the mouth of her brother, James Macdonald, who had only to say " Arise " and she arose. Macdonald sent a message to Mary Campbell and straightway she was cured also.

These occurrences caused great excitement in the National Scotch Church in Regent Square. Irving now prayed openly for miraculous interventions in his own flock. His prayers were answered. A young woman of his congregation burst into speech, in her own home, in an unknown tongue ; then similar utterances were heard in the church. Irving believed that the Holy Ghost was speaking. He allowed his church to become the scene of these hysterical outbursts, Sunday after Sunday.

One day Carlyle spoke to him most earnestly, telling him how distressed he was at these things. " During all this, which perhaps lasted about twenty minutes, Irving sat opposite to me, within a few feet ; my wife to his right hand and to my left, silent and sad-looking, in the middle of the floor, Irving, with head downcast, face indicating great pain, but without the slightest word or sound from him till I had altogether ended. He then began with the mildest low tone, and face full of kindness and composed distress—' dear friend,' and endeavoured to make his apology and defence, which did not last long or do anything to convince me, but was in a style of modesty and friendly

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magnanimity which no mortal could surpass, and which remains to me at this moment dear and memorable and worthy of honour."

As was only to be expected, the London Presbytery intervened; after long discussion, and an explanation from Irving, he was removed from the National Scotch Church, on the 2nd May, 1832. The Irvingite services were thenceforth conducted in Newman Street. Next year, in March 1833, the Presbytery of Annan, where he had been ordained, deposed Irving as a heretic, for propounding views with regard to the dual nature of Christ, which at the present time would not be considered singular. Ejected from the Church, Irving was at the same time being superseded in his own chapel. The Irvingism of Newman Street had passed beyond the control of the founder. All Irving's hopes were utterly destroyed, and his health gave way under these terrible disappointments.

The last time Carlyle saw Irving was in October 1834, when he came to Cheyne Row to say farewell before his departure for Scotland. "He was very friendly, calm, and affectionate," said Carlyle, "chivalrously courteous to *her*, as I remember, 'Ah yes,' looking round the room, 'you are like an Eve—make every place you live in beautiful.'"

The life of Edward Irving came to an end on the 6th December, 1834, at the age of forty-two. Carlyle wrote an eloquent eulogy of his friend, which was published in *Fraser's Magazine*, January 1835. "But for Irving," he said, "I had never known what the communion of man with man means. His was the freest, brotherliest, bravest, human soul mine ever came in contact with."

His early death was caused, in Carlyle's opinion, by the same influences that had brought Burns to a premature grave, by "mad extremes of flattery, followed by madder contumely, by indifference and neglect! By a fatal chance, Fashion cast her eye on him, as on some impersonation of Novel-Cameronianism, some wild Product of Nature from the wild mountains; Fashion crowded round him, with her meteor lights and Bacchic dances; breathed her foul

incense on him ; intoxicating, poisoning. One may say, it was his own nobleness that forwarded such ruin ; the excess of his sociability and sympathy, of his value for the suffrages and sympathies of men. Siren songs, as of a new Moral Reformation (sons of Mammon, and high sons of Belial and Beelzebub, to become sons of God, and the green flowers of Almack's to be made living roses in a new Eden) sound in the inexperienced ear and heart. Most seductive, most delusive ! Fashion went her idle way, to gaze on Egyptian Crocodiles, Iroquois Hunters, or what else there might be ; forgot this man—who unhappily could not in his turn forget. The intoxicating poison had been swallowed ; no force of natural health could cast it out. Unconsciously, for most part in deep unconsciousness, there was now the impossibility to live neglected ; to walk on the quiet paths, where alone it is well with us. Singularity must henceforth succeed Singularity. O foulest Circean draught, thou poison of Popular Applause ! madness is in thee, and death ; thy end is Bedlam and the Grave."

But a few lines further on Carlyle provides a refutation of this contention, for he says that " Irving clave to his Belief, as to his soul's soul," because he was not " a half-man " but " a whole man." It was belief, not the songs of sirens, or the desire for singularity that guided Irving. He had escaped, he wrote to Basil Montagu, from the snares and temptations of " those high noble circles of society which were open to me, and which must either have engulfed me by their enormous attractions, or else repelled my simple affections, shattered and befooled, to become the mockery and contempt of every envious and disappointed railer." Irving's biographer, after defending him from the charge brought against him by Carlyle, speaks of the danger of a " society such that men of genius continually lose their head, and sometimes break their heart in seeking it."[1]

[1] *The Life of Edward Irving*, by Mrs. Oliphant, Vol. II., p. 186. In the *Reminiscences* Carlyle says that Mrs. Oliphant misunderstood him ; but the meaning of the article is quite clear and in accord with Carlyle's contemporary letters.

Meanwhile Carlyle was still waiting for the sirens to turn their attention to him. How could they remain silent so long, when he knew himself to be the first man since the foundation of the Christian religion who could see through the vestures of things? He declared in a letter to John that no mortal for two thousand years had seen man as an unclothed animal, except himself. He was making the claim of Irving, that in him the apostolic gift was renewed; and he insisted that unless there was a great change in men's faith, a terrible catastrophe was inevitable. Only for the sake of the few just men was the destruction postponed. But for them "the whole concern would take fire."[1]

Carlyle's chief friends at this time were Leigh Hunt, J. S. Mill, and John Sterling. Harriet Martineau was one of the frequent callers. Others, besides the Bullers and Stracheys, were Henry Taylor, who introduced Carlyle to Southey and Wordsworth, the Austins, Mrs. Somerville, Allan Cunningham, the Wilsons, Frederick Maurice, Spedding, Milnes. Refugees of various nationalities came to Cheyne Row. Amongst them were Godefroi Cavaignac, brother of the General; Mazzini, of the Risorgimento: the Contessa degli Antoni, who gave Mrs. Carlyle lessons in Italian; Count Pepoli, who married Elizabeth Fergus of Kirkcaldy; Plattnauer and Garnier, two Germans of unstable mentality, both of them quite mad at times. Mrs. Carlyle remarked that her husband's writings were admired most by women and mad people.

Mr. and Mrs. Basil Montagu had been among the first to befriend Carlyle on his visit to London in 1824–5, and to welcome him and his wife in 1830–1. But Mrs. Montagu's interference in the Carlyle-Welsh courtship had been received with resentment; and when, on the death of Irving, she wrote to Mrs. Carlyle a letter of condolence, additional offence had been given. Now Basil Montagu made Carlyle the tactless offer of a clerkship in his office at £200 a year. Though not a wise proposal, it was kindly meant, but Carlyle's pride was hurt. In the *Reminiscences*

[1] *Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton, II., 193.

he spoke in the most cruel way of these old friends who had stood by him when he was unknown and forlorn.

Another offer came to him through his latest disciple, John Sterling, who had been introduced to him by Mill. John's father, Edward Sterling, was the leader-writer who obtained for *The Times* the name of the " Thunderer." Edward Sterling proposed that Carlyle should join the staff of *The Times* as a regular contributor, but Carlyle's spirit of independence made it impossible for him to accept any position in which his work was to be done to order, and submitted to the " editing " of an employer.

The work on the French Revolution was interrupted by a catastrophe. One evening, the 6th March, 1835, Mill came to Cheyne Row, in a distracted condition. The manuscript of the early chapters of the *French Revolution* had been lent to him, and he had left it with Mrs. Taylor ; a housemaid had, by mistake, destroyed it, using it for lighting the fire.

In this crisis Carlyle's conduct was perfect, much to be admired and envied. His wife told Froude, years later, that the first words her husband uttered as the door closed on Mill, were : " Well, Mill, poor fellow, is terribly cut up ; we must endeavour to hide from him how very serious this business is to us."

He had to re-write the first chapters, a horrible thing to have to do, especially for Carlyle, who wrote always in a condition of emotion, and had to work himself into that state a second time, on the same subject. The job, for such it had become, occupied him for six months. Mill sent him a cheque for £200 as compensation, but Carlyle would not accept more than the cost of his living for six months, which he put at the modest sum of £100.

He wrote to his mother that if anyone had asked him to throw the writing into the fire, and asked what he would take, he would have been " *ill, ill indeed* to deal with." The phrase had been used by his mother on one occasion when he had been difficult to please. It had stuck in his memory and was often quoted by Mrs. Carlyle, who used it sometimes in the sense of ill to live with. Carlyle himself,

in the *Reminiscences* says, " Could I be easy to live with ? " The exclamation of Carlyle's mother was remembered and referred to by Carlyle and his wife, because it contained a truth which he admitted, and his wife was pleased to emphasise, that Carlyle was not an easy man either to deal with or to live with.

CHAPTER XV

"THE FRENCH REVOLUTION: A HISTORY"

THE book which was destined to make Carlyle's reputation, was finished on 12th January, 1837. "This I could tell the world," he said to his wife, "you have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man."

Sartor ("poor beast" was Mrs. Carlyle's affectionate description of that extraordinary production) was, it will be remembered, a work the like of which had not been seen for a period which Carlyle put sometimes at eighteen hundred, sometimes at two thousand years.

Once read, Carlyle's *French Revolution* cannot be forgotten. There are images, and impressions, which Carlyle has put into the blood, and the brain, that will never be eradicated. Even the most stolid reader is carried off his feet sometimes. For most of us the French Revolution is what Carlyle described. This is unfortunate, for he misunderstood the phenomenon.

He called his book *The French Revolution: A History.* It is more like an epic poem. Incidents are chosen for their dramatic appeal, not for their importance. Carlyle had tried to write a novel, but he lacked the faculty of invention. With a story of real events provided for him, he found, at last, a vehicle for exhibiting his powers. A subject more admirably suited to his genius could hardly have been chosen, a fearful conflagration, with individual figures appearing and then becoming engulfed. For the first time in the literature of the Revolution we are given portraits recognisable as those of human beings. How far they are accurate likenesses may be disputed. As

Emerson said, we have men, but perhaps not the real men.

The French Revolution was to Carlyle an example of Divine Vengeance. The eighteenth century had been a period of unbelief. The encyclopædists, with their perfectibility, and their airs of omniscience, were insulters of God. Society became corrupt. Retribution followed inevitably.

The book opens with a dramatic description of the death of Louis XV. The licentiousness of that monarch called for the wrath of God. Madame de Pompadour, like Nell Gwynne in her day, was an emblem of the wickedness of the time. One of these women brought about the French Revolution, the other symbolised the Government which refused to endorse The Solemn League and Covenant.

"For as Hierarchies and Dynasties of all kinds, Theocracies, Aristocracies, Autocracies, Strumpetocracies, have ruled over the world; so it was appointed, in the decrees of Providence, that this same Victorious Anarchy, Jacobinism, Sansculottism, French Revolution, Horrors of French Revolution or what else mortals name it, should have its turn. The 'destructive wrath' of Sansculottism: this is what we speak having unhappily no voice for singing. . . . Fear not Sansculottism; recognise it for what it is, the portentous inevitable end of much, the miraculous beginning of much. One other thing thou mayest understand of it: that it too came from God; for has it not *been*? From of old, as it is written, are His goings forth; in the great Deep of things; fearful and wonderful now as in the beginning: in the whirlwind also He speaks; and the wrath of men is made to praise Him. But to gauge and measure this immeasurable Thing, and what is called account for it, and reduce it to a dead logic-formula, attempt not!"

Having denounced those who attempted to account for the Revolution by logic-formula, Carlyle proceeded to follow their example. His account was that the twenty-five millions of France, after enduring centuries of tyranny, were inspired by God to rise and destroy their oppressors. His formula was that the Revolution was God's Judgment for Sin.

"So many centuries, say only from Hugh Capet downwards had been adding together, century transmitting it with increase to century, the sum of Wickedness, of Falsehood, Oppression of man by man. . . . And yet, as God lives, they *shall reap the whirlwind*: no other thing, we say, is possible—since God is a Truth and His World is a Truth. . . . It is as if twenty-five millions, risen at length into the Pythian mood, had stood up simultaneously to say, with a sound that goes through far lands and times, that this Untruth of an Existence has become insupportable. O ye hypocrisies and Speciosities, Royal Mantles, Cardinal plush-cloaks, ye Credos, Formulas, Respectabilities, fair-painted Sepulchres full of dead men's bones,—behold ye appear to us to be altogether a Lie. Yet our Life is not a Lie; yet our Hunger and Misery is not a Lie! Behold we lift up, one and all, our Twenty-five million right-hands; and take the Heavens, and the Earth and also the Pit of Tophet to witness that either ye shall be abolished, or else we shall be abolished. . . . Sansculottism reigning in all its grandeur and all its hideousness: the Gospel (God's Message) of Man's Rights, Man's *mights* or strengths, once more paraded irrefragably abroad."

This account and formula have given long life to the mistaken belief that the aristocracy in France was exceptionally tyrannical and self-indulgent, while the poor were far more miserable and down-trodden than in other countries on the Continent. That error furnishes the motive of Carlyle's book. On the whole, the French nobility compared well with other Continental nobilities. Many of those who were elected to the States-General went there with the intention of abandoning some of their privileges; and on the 4th August, 1789, they gave up, voluntarily, all their feudal rights. Far from being exceptionally cruel, it was their tenderness to malefactors, their unwillingness to repress disorder with prompt severity, that was their undoing.

The poor were not more wretched in France than elsewhere. Their political privileges were unexampled at that time. The third Estate was elected on a suffrage

which was practically universal. Only the poorest of the poor were excluded from the franchise.

One of Carlyle's greatest mistakes was his belief that the French nation approved the deposition and execution of their King, desired the Republic, and sanctioned the Terror. The Revolution was, indeed, in its initial stage, supported by the nation. In the first few months many abuses were abolished. But the changes were too sudden, and accompanied by too much violence. Very soon the movement fell under the control of a small knot of agitators in Paris who commanded the services of the criminal class. The whole party numbered but a minute portion of the population. Their weapons were robbery and murder. Carlyle imagined that the twenty-five millions obtained a life of freedom and plenty, whereas in fact their fate was, as long as these men were in power, such misery and oppression as no civilised people had, up to that date, ever experienced. Their lot became infinitely worse than it had been under the *ancien régime*. The reforms achieved by the Revolution in France have been obtained in other countries without volcanic eruptions. Carlyle's belief that things were so bad that nothing but violent Revolution could mend them, rests upon no historic basis.

In spite of his gift for portraiture, he failed to perceive that the leaders of the Revolution were animated principally by hatred of all persons who were either richer, or better educated, or nobler in character or more presentable in appearance than themselves. The insignificant (Robespierre), the deformed (Couthon), the frail (St. Just), the repulsive (Marat), the pock-marked (Danton), grasped the opportunity for revenge upon society. They were vain, jealous, egotistical, eager for power and importance and also cruel and unscrupulous.

Satisfied with his account and formula, which were derived from the teachings of his childhood, Carlyle ignored the real causes of the disturbed condition of society in France, and did not enquire why that state of things produced a Revolution. He took the easiest line, the common, thoughtless view, that since in France the

Government was overthrown, the King executed, the owners of property and privilege murdered, abuse of power must have been more flagrant there than in other Continental countries—which was not the case. The French were peculiarly disposed towards disaffection with their Government for a number of reasons, which Carlyle either did not perceive or considered to be of small moment.

Montesquieu, the *éclaireurs* and encyclopædists, Voltaire, Rousseau, and many others, had, in their several ways, attacked the system of Government in France. Their works had immense influence in teaching Frenchmen to disregard authority. Rousseau in particular, with his *Discourse on Inequality*, his *Social Contract*, his sentiment and plausible logic, convinced many of the necessity of reforming society.

The defeat of France in the Seven Years' War was a heavy blow to the Government. In the opinion of Napoleon the battle of Rossbach was the chief cause of the Revolution. It was certainly one of the most important causes.

Here it may be observed that the Russian Revolution of our day has followed the French precedent in the most remarkable manner. Defeat in war—first by Japan, then by Germany—was in Russia the final cause. It is probable that if France had been victorious in the Seven Years' War there would have been no French Revolution; and that if the Russian armies had succeeded in marching to Berlin in 1916 there would never have been any abdication of the Czar.

The successful revolt of the American Colonies, and establishment of a system of Government based upon democratic principles, had peculiar effect upon opinion in France, owing to the close association of that country with the Americans in their struggle for freedom. At the same time the great expense of the war added to the financial difficulties of the Government.

The taxes fell heavily on the poor, while the nobles, as in other countries of the Continent, were comparatively untouched. The taxes did not suffice to pay the expenses

of the Government. There was an ever-increasing deficit in the national accounts. The bourgeois, who were sufferers from the failure of the Government to meet the interest on the national debt, insisted that the aristocrats should be made to pay their share towards the national expenditure.

The conditions we have named either did not exist in other countries, or were counteracted there by other circumstances. That is why, though there were Pompadours in every Continental Court except the French, the Revolution occurred in France.

In this predicament Louis XVI summoned, first, the Notables, then the Parlements, and finally the States-General, thereby abandoning much of his power, and lowering his authority. He called upon his people to help him, and they concluded that his advisers were incompetent and that the system of Government required to be changed. Every man with an idea in his head rushed forward to proclaim his views. The bourgeois class, which had increased in wealth since the Seven Years' War, hoped to break down the barriers which excluded it from admittance into the ranks above. Nearly all the leaders of the Revolution came from that part of the nation. There were, in the early days, genuine enthusiasts among them, who believed that the world might be regenerated if the existing state of society were overturned. But the great majority of them were inspired by nothing nobler than the motto of Camille Desmoulins—"No Superior!"

The Revolution was made by the middle class, partly out of envy of the upper class, partly because the Government had ceased to pay the interest on their Bonds. For Carlyle no such class existed. Nowhere in his works do we find any consciousness of the importance of those who are neither aristocrats nor peasants, who express, indeed, the voice of the nation. His mistake of supposing that the Revolution was a spontaneous uprising of the poor against the nobles was due to his ignoring the influence of the great middle class, the leaven of a nation, whose size and character are the test of a well-ordered community.

The fiery speeches of the bourgeois, attacking the privileges of the class above them, encouraged those below to expect advancement of their own. Criminals and demagogues, ever lying in wait for such an opportunity, exerted themselves to enlarge the disorder. When it had become serious, the King and Government, by their weak forbearance, reduced still further their authority and encouraged the malefactors. The Prussian Ambassador in Paris, acting under the express order of Frederick William II, employed agents supplied with money to spread revolutionary doctrines and to instigate acts of violence. Marie Antoinette, owing to her dislike of Prussia, which was the natural result of Frederick the Great's attacks upon her mother, the Empress Maria Theresa, was the special mark of the Prussian Ambassador, from whom emanated many of the libels circulated about her. Already unpopular from her nationality, the Queen was guilty of imprudences in conduct which were exaggerated by the Prussian emissaries, and also by the Duke of Orléans and his supporters. The nation was taught to regard the unfortunate Marie Antoinette as the evil genius of the King, whose benevolent nature was poisoned by the proud and autocratic Austrian.

The King's unsuccessful attempt to escape from Paris to the eastern frontier destroyed what was left of the Royal authority. From that date the King was virtually dethroned. The soldiers were told that the King's flight was an abdication. The army could not be used to repress public disorder.

So also, in Russia in 1917, the abdication of the Czar and destruction of discipline in the army, paved the way for the extremists. In Russia also there had been an amiable King, too much under the influence of an autocratic, foreign Queen, whose private character was wrongly attacked. The reports of the levity or immorality of the Czarina, which emanated from Court circles, were of the same nature as the libels of the Orléans faction upon Marie Antoinette. The result in both cases was that all went down together. In Russia the Revolution was begun,

as in France, by the bourgeoisie. On both occasions Prussian emissaries had a large share in producing the catastrophe. In France and in Russia, the worst excesses were committed by miscreants from foreign countries. The Marseillais were the world's scum from a great seaport.

A Revolutionary Tribunal was established which condemned people to death in great numbers, without any sort of impartial trial. All who were above the poorest class were styled aristocrats, or counter-revolutionaries. To avoid being murdered, and to obtain food, a certificate of civism had to be obtained, in each municipality, from the local band of ruffians. Without this card it was useless to stand in the long queue leading to the baker's shop, for the bread could be bought only by those who could produce this evidence of their being neither aristocratic nor counter-revolutionary.

The Government lived for a time on the confiscated property of the King, the Nobles, and the Church, but further resources became necessary owing to the extravagant cost of the Revolutionary Administration. The number of Government officials became enormous; their salaries alone exceeded what had been the whole expenditure of the Royal Government. To meet this colossal outlay, paper money was issued in great quantities, until its value had practically disappeared. Refusal to accept it at its face value was punishable by death. The lowest value the *assignat* ever reached was 9,000 francs to the English sovereign, in June 1796. In the following February France repudiated its paper money.

The Church was attacked with great ferocity, large numbers of clergy being deprived of their benefices, or murdered. Ribald imitations of the Church ceremonies were publicly performed. The Church schools were, for a time, closed. Communists of all countries regard religion as one of their chief enemies. Even family life was considered to be counter-revolutionary.

In these ways a system of oppression and cruelty was established far worse than had ever been known in any civilised country. Its only imitator, and rival, has been

the Bolshevist Government of our day, which has followed and exaggerated the Jacobin lead. Some of the Bolshevist proclamations contain sentences taken from the speeches of Robespierre. History has indeed repeated itself in the most remarkable manner. One may conclude that all Revolutions which are based upon hatred of superiority, must from their very nature be of the Jacobin-Bolshevist character.

On all these important matters Carlyle was either ignorant or prejudiced. If accused of intemperate partisanship he would have replied that impartiality is nothing but lukewarm indifference. His antipathy to the Roman Catholic Church, for instance, carried him far.

"Dissident Priests likewise give trouble. Expelled from the Parish Churches, where Constitutional Priests, elected by the Public, have replaced them, these unhappy persons resort to Convents of Nuns, or other such receptacles; and there, on Sabbath, collecting assemblages of Anti-Constitutional individuals who have grown devout all on a sudden, they worship or pretend to worship in their straitlaced contumacious manner; to the scandal of Patriotism. Dissident Priests passing along with their sacred wafer for the dying, seem wistful to be massacred in the streets; wherein Patriotism will not gratify them. Slighter palm of martyrdom, however, shall not be denied: Martyrdom not of massacre, yet of fustigation. At the refractory places of worship, Patriot men appear: Patriot women with strong hazel wands, which they apply. Shut thy eyes, O Reader; see not this misery, peculiar to these later times—of martyrdom without ceremony, with only cant and contumacy!"

From this the reader would suppose that the dissident priests were a small sect of men, noted for cant and straitlaced contumacy, who desired the death of martyrs, and that French patriots gave them the fate they deserved, a physical castigation of a humiliating nature.

The dissident priests were the non-jurors, who refused to accept the Civil constitution of the Clergy. They comprised one hundred and thirty out of the one hundred

and thirty-four bishops, and about two-thirds of the rest of the clergy ; and they carried with them the sympathies of the majority of the French people. All of them suffered persecution, poverty, ill-usage, for the sake of their religion ; a large number preferred death to a repudiation of their beliefs. If they had been Cameronians their " straitlaced contumacy " would have been extolled by Carlyle as heroism. Yet they were martyrs for conscience as much as any Cameronian.

With regard to the events of the 4th August, 1789, Carlyle says : " A memorable night, this fourth of August : Dignitaries, temporal and spiritual : Peers, Archbishops, Parliament-Presidents, each out-doing the other in patriotic devotedness, come successively to throw their now untenable possessions on ' the altar of the fatherland.' With louder and louder *vivats*—for indeed it is ' after dinner ' too—they abolish Tithes, Seignorial Dues, Gabelle, excessive Preservation of Game ; nay Privilege, Immunity, Feudalism root and branch ; then appoint a Te Deum for it ; and so finally, disperse about three in the morning, striking the stars with their sublime heads."

It will be observed that Carlyle declared that the nobles and clergy who came forward to abandon their rights and much of their wealth, were in an " after dinner " condition, and that they gave up only what they had already lost. In that case, how could their action be " for ever memorable ? " If all that they did was to abandon, in a fit of alcoholic sentimentality, what they no longer possessed, the event would never have excited any interest.[1] Almost all the *cahiers* which the nobles brought with them to the States-General on 4th May contained instructions to renounce their pecuniary privileges, and on the 23rd May already they had declared their intention to abandon their feudal prerogatives.[2]

[1] " On this memorable night many of the nobles and clergy displayed the best and most generous impulses of the French character. When we think of the doom for which these patriots were too often reserved, we cannot refuse our deepest compassion as well as our respect " (*The Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VIII., p. 179).

[2] Carlyle's *French Revolution*, edited by Dr. Holland Rose, Vol. I., pp. 183, 258.

The account of the flight to Varennes is one of the famous things in the book. It is full of errors.

A new carriage had been built for the Royal Family, with a view to the adventure. "Miserable new Berline! Why could not Royalty go in some old Berline similar to that of other men? Flying for life, one does not stickle about his vehicle. Monsieur in a commonplace travelling-carriage, is off Northwards; Madame, his Princess, in another, with variation of route. . . . All runs along unmolested, speedy, except only the new Berline. Huge leathern vehicle: huge Argosy, let us say, or Acapulco ship; with its heavy stern-boat of Chaise-and-pair; with its three yellow Pilot-boats of mounted Bodyguard Couriers, rocking aimless round it and ahead of it, to bewilder, not to guide! It lumbers along, lurchingly with stress, at a snail's pace; noted of all the world. The Bodyguard Couriers, in their yellow liveries, go prancing and clattering; loyal but stupid; unacquainted with all things. Stoppages occur; and breakages, to be repaired at Etages. King Louis too will dismount, will walk up hills, and enjoy the blessed sunshine: with eleven horses and double drink-money, and all furtherances of Nature and Art, it will be found that Royalty, flying for life, accomplished Sixty-nine miles in Twenty-two incessant hours. Slow Royalty! And yet not a minute of these hours but is precious: on minutes hang the destinies of Royalty now."

The party in the berline consisted of six persons—the King, the Queen, Madame Elizabeth (the King's sister), the Dauphin, Madame Royale, and Madame de Tourzel, in attendance on the two children. The Royal Family were obliged to leave Paris together, for the absence of one would have been discovered and then an extra watch would have been set upon the remainder. When once they were outside Paris, the danger of discovery might have been less if the party had divided. But both Marie Antoinette and Elizabeth insisted on accompanying the King, and though their presence increased the risk, it was not in his power, even if it had been his desire, to leave them to find their own way. Count Fersen, who made

some of the arrangements for the flight, and saw the Royal Family well on their way after leaving Paris, begged to be allowed to accompany them further, but permission was not granted. That was a great mistake. It is probable that Fersen, who at least had energy, would have managed to get the King through safely. Even without Fersen the attempt was very nearly successful. Another blunder was the gathering at stated points of military escorts, to await the Royal carriage. These collections of troops attracted attention.

There was no ground for the idea which Carlyle desired to entertain, that the King and Queen made themselves needlessly conspicuous, from vanity and love of grandeur. The berline was not an unusual type of vehicle; an old berline would have been more liable to break down, and would have been as much like an Acapulco ship as a new one. The King did not, in fact, retard progress by walking. The blessed sunshine is Carlyle's invention, for the day happened to be dull. The chaise is called a "heavy stern-boat"; it was not heavy, nor did it travel astern; it was a light vehicle which went in front. The aimless rocking round of "three yellow pilot-boats" is more invention. One of the bodyguard went ahead to order relays of horses, one sat on the box, and one rode in the rear.

The berline "lumbers along, lurchingly with stress, at a snail's pace." It did "sixty-nine miles in twenty-two incessant hours," said Carlyle, which he calculates in another passage as "under the weightiest drag-rate, some three miles an hour." On the contrary the berline went very fast. It is one hundred and fifty miles from Paris to Varennes. An article in the *Quarterly Review*, January 1823, by Croker, had already given the distance correctly. The desire to blame the King helped Carlyle to make the unpardonable mistake of confusing leagues with miles. We may be confident that no such error would have been made if it had redounded to the King's credit. The berline travelled, including stoppages, at seven miles an hour, more than double the pace that Carlyle so carelessly, and willingly, attributed to it. At one part of the journey

the rate was as high as ten miles an hour. At that time these were exceptional speeds. Comte Valory, who went ahead, says in his account published in 1823, which should have been familiar to Carlyle, that the berline went "with great swiftness." Valory had to press his own horse in order to keep in front. Instead of being abnormally slow, as Carlyle insisted, with such emphasis, the pace was remarkably fast.

The whole object of Carlyle's story was to cast ridicule on the King and Queen for using a luxurious and showy vehicle, which was bound to attract attention, and which could not travel at a normal speed. In order to sustain this fiction he invented some things, and accepted others without the most ordinary examination, and was thus able to indulge his humour. What a different tone he would have adopted if the King had succeeded in escaping, as he very nearly did!

Carlyle's view of the Revolution is mistaken from beginning to end, because he was incapable of freeing himself from acquired convictions, and was therefore unable to see the facts as they were. With his wonderful power he gives the reader a feeling of tragedy, of awful fate, of the inevitableness of the catastrophe. Wrong-doing entails retribution. The lesson is true and tremendous; we ignore it at our peril. But to claim that by applying this moral principle to the French Revolution Carlyle produced a book which is "substantially" accurate, is to make one word do too much work. The reader who desires to obtain a true account of what actually occurred should avoid Carlyle's dramatic moving picture.

The Revolution, he said, was the work of God. "The Upper Powers" were "minded that a new Chapter in Universal History shall begin here and not further on. . . . This question of King Louis will take the lead of all the rest . . . as Aaron's Rod swallowed all the other Serpents . . . it was appointed of Fate." So, the career of Napoleon was God's cure for the extravagances of the revolutionists; a Hero was sent to suppress anarchy and substitute despotism.

The doctrine leads inevitably to worship of success, for every triumph is due to God and the victor is to be revered accordingly. The fact of his survival shows that he was the fittest to survive. Thus might is proof of right. But the formula does not help us to decide upon our conduct in any given emergency, for the element of time interferes. We cannot know whether any particular victory will endure.

We may suppose that the world is governed by a law of progress. That there has been progress we may safely assert for, though some insist that " human nature " has not changed, there can be no doubt that the modern man is a superior being to his ancestor of the remote past. And there has been immense improvement in the conditions of life, which give physical comfort and long days, spiritual satisfaction, and a closer human companionship.[1]

The only actions which should be praised, and imitated, are those which, so far as we can ascertain, conform to the spirit of the law of progress ; which, whatever may be the immediate result, are, in the long run, of benefit to mankind. Herein lies the origin of our standards of behaviour. The individual is to conduct himself so that he does not injure the community to which he belongs.

Carlyle insisted that we must conform to God's decrees, to the Laws of Fact, or we shall rue it. God will send His representatives to punish us. Thus was he led to applaud the accomplished deed, to accept each success as it occurred. He had no doubt that the French Revolution was a salutary event, because it had a period of triumph, and must therefore, during that space of time, have been the work of God. Napoleon, in his turn, was evidently a Divine agent, until he sought other Gods, and had to be punished. This manner of thought, derived from the Old Testament, had been learned by Carlyle in the house of his parents. It was the religion of Annandale that he was

[1] The movement of thought on this subject has been traced from early times in the late Professor Bury's *History of the Idea of Progress.* Bury was inclined to be sceptical. But to the question, " Is it better to be a man than an ape ? " a unanimous affirmative would be given.

expounding to the world. It was also the law of border warfare:

> The good old rule, the simple plan;
> That he should take who has the power,
> And he should keep who can.

As Carlyle said in his *Reminiscences*, the man who was respected in the Annandale district was the successful *striker*.

So we find the execution of Louis XVI led up to by a chapter headed "The Loser Pays"; and that of Marie Antoinette by the remark, "for all now has become a crime, in her who has *lost*." He continues, "It was from of old said, *The Loser pays*! It is he who has to pay *all* scores, run up by whomsoever; on him must all breakages and charges fall; and the twelve hundred on the tenth of August are not rebel traitors, but victims and martyrs; such is the law of quarrel. . . . If the truth must be spoken, O august Senators, the only law in this case is *Vae victis*. The loser pays! Seldom did Robespierre say a wiser word than the hint he gave to that effect, in his oration, that it was needless to speak of Law; that here, if never elsewhere, our Right was Might."

The "twelve hundred on the tenth of August," in the passage we have quoted, is a reference to the attack on the Tuileries on the 10th August, 1792, when, according to Carlyle, twelve hundred of the attackers were killed. The assault had been planned by the revolutionary leaders, in order to obtain possession of the persons of the Royal Family. While the attack was in progress the King—fearful only for his wife and children, for he was not a coward—escaped with his family into the hall of the National Assembly. The garrison meanwhile was making a successful defence of the Palace. It began to be feared that the attack might fail, and that a Royalist reaction might follow. The King was urged to give an order to the garrison to cease fire. Ever anxious to put an end to bloodshed, he issued the order; which was obeyed. The insurgents rushed in and massacred not only the garrison

but most of the civilians whom they found in the Palace. The insurgent loss, sustained in the beginning, when the garrison had been allowed to fight, was about a hundred; of the garrison and civilians more than eight hundred were murdered in cold blood.

Carlyle multiplied the insurgents' loss by twelve. "O ye National Deputies, do not the dead Patriots plead? The Twelve hundred that lie in cold obstruction, do they not plead: and petition, in Death's dumb-show, from their narrow house there, more eloquently than speech? Crippled Patriots hop on crutches round the Salle de Manège demanding Justice. The wounded of the tenth of August, the widows and orphans of the killed petition in a body; and hop and defile, eloquently mute, through the hall: one wounded Patriot, unable to hop, is borne on his bed thither, and passes shoulder-high, in the horizontal posture."

His sympathy was with those among the aggressors who had been killed or wounded by the garrison in self-defence against a wanton, unprovoked, attack—not with the garrison and civilians, who had been butchered when making no resistance, As for Louis and his wife, they had lost, and had to pay the penalty. According to the law of quarrel they were put to death.

Even the poor little Dauphin was one of the failures. Carlyle says: "The boy, once named Dauphin, was taken from his Mother while she yet lived; and given to one Simon, by trade a Cordwainer, in service then about the Temple-prison, to bring him up in principles of Sansculottism. Simon taught him to drink, to swear, to sing the *carmagnole*. Simon is now gone to the Municipality; the poor boy, hidden in a tower of the Temple, from which in his fright and bewilderment and early decrepitude he wished not to stir out, lies perishing, 'his shirt not changed for six months'; amid squalor and darkness, lamentably —so as none but poor Factory Children and the like are wont to perish, and *not* be lamented!"

But even in Carlyle's day poor factory children did not at the age of eight have to undergo, for no fault of their

own, six months of isolation followed by a similar period of absolute and complete solitude. The suggestion that the boy might have emerged from his prison if he had so wished, should not have been advanced without the support of convincing evidence.[1]

The deaths of Louis and Marie Antoinette are, in Carlyle's hands, wonderfully dramatic scenes. The slow torture of the Dauphin made no appeal to him because he could not visualise it as a picture.

Others who had lost were in the prisons. On the 2nd September, 1792, a mock tribunal was set up outside each prison ; the inmates were brought before it, and after a slight examination, were led outside, where they were killed by hired assassins, armed with swords and similar weapons. The ground was soon deep in blood ; the murderers became splashed all over with it. Nothing so awful, or so wicked, had then ever occurred in the history of civilisation. This went on steadily and methodically for five days, until the supply of victims was exhausted. About 1,500 perished, among them women and boys of the criminal class. More than two-thirds were of the people ; the aristocrats were less than fifty, the priests two hundred and fifty. The massacre was prepared and organised by Marat and other leaders of the Commune. The murderers, from two to three hundred in number, were chiefly the scum of Marseilles, and released criminals. They worked for the stipulated wage of one louis. Some accepted even less, but there was no stint of wine.

Excuses for these horrors were discovered by Carlyle. He said there had been worse things done, citing the Sicilian Vespers, the " Bartholomew Business," and " Burgundies massacring Armagnacs." The Sicilian Vespers were five hundred years old, the Armagnac massacres nearly four hundred years, Bartholomew two hundred years. By

[1] " The story of the Revolution is moving in many of its incidents ; the resigned piety of Louis XVI's end and the superb dignity of his Queen's, the sufferings of Bailly and the passing of Danton, stir us all to sympathy ; but nothing in the whole blood-stained tale touches the heart-strings as does the slow and cruel torture to which the Dauphin was subjected for no fault but that of his birth " (*Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VIII., p. 389).

searching the history of the barbarous past, says Carlyle, one may find three examples which may be compared with the events of September, 1792, in Paris. And he comes back always to his Fact, the death of the murdered. "The thing lay done, irrevocable. . . . Shriek ye, acted have they. Nay, instead of shrieking more, it were perhaps edifying to remark, on the other side, what a singular thing Customs (in Latin *mores*) are; and how fitly the Virtue, *Vir-tus* Manhood or Worth, that is in a man, is called his *Morality* or *Customariness*. Fell slaughter, one of the most authentic products of the Pit you would say, once give it Customs, becomes War, with Laws of War; and is Customs and Moral enough; and red individuals carry the tools of it girt round their haunches, not without an air of pride—which do thou nowise blame. While see! so long as it is but dressed in hodden or russet; and Revolution, less frequent than War, has not yet got its Laws of Revolution, but the hodden or russet individuals are uncustomary—O shrieking beloved brother blockheads of Mankind, let us close those wide mouths of ours, let us cease shrieking and begin considering!"

It is a patriotic act to kill, in self-defence, an armed invader of one's country, who will kill you if you do not kill him; therefore, wholesale, premeditated killing of unarmed and defenceless fellow citizens, their wives and their children, should not be reprobated. Such slaughter is, in Carlyle's opinion, legitimate, in a time of Revolution. War has its customs, among them being the humane treatment of prisoners. Revolution also has its customs, among them being the massacre of prisoners. Those who complain are wide-mouthed blockheads. This argument has been adopted in our day in Russia, where great numbers of defenceless persons have been slaughtered, on the plea that a Revolution was in progress. But, on that basis, murder, to prevent Revolution, becomes an act of self-defence on the part of those persons whose lives will be forfeited when the Revolution comes. Thus he may kill who can, at any time. The noble may kill to prevent Revolution, the peasant in order to bring it about. When

Carlyle, in conversation with Tennyson, repeated with approval the Jacobin principle, "Be my brother, or I will kill you," Tennyson replied, "In that case I shall have to kill you first."

Having justified murder, Carlyle went on to assert that there had not been much of it. "This Convention, now grown Antijacobin, did, with an eye to justify and fortify itself, publish Lists of what the Reign of Terror had perpetrated: Lists of Persons guillotined. The lists, cries splenetic Abbé Montgaillard, were not complete. They contained the names of, How many persons thinks the Reader?—Two thousand all but a few. There were above Four thousand, cries Montgaillard: so many were guillotined, fusilladed, noyaded, done to death; of whom nine hundred were women. It is a horrible sum of human lives, M. l'Abbé: some ten times as many shot rightly on a field of battle, and one might have had his Glorious-Victory with *Te Deum*. It is not far from the two-hundredth part of what perished in the entire Seven Years' War."

Reference is given to Montgaillard's *Histoire de France depuis la fin du règne de Louis XVI jusqu'à l'année* 1825, Vol. IV., p. 241. The passage runs as follows: "During the twelve months of the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris, there were more than four thousand victims of its arrests, of whom nine hundred were women." It will be observed that Carlyle has misinterpreted the passage, confusing those guillotined in Paris in twelve months, with the total of deaths, in the whole of France, during the Reign of Terror, by guillotine, fusillade, noyade, or other means. The splenetic Montgaillard was not referring to this huge list, which contained far more than four thousand names. Carrier alone put to death at least five thousand.

Two hundred times 4,000 is 800,000. It is possible that the total loss of life, direct and indirect, among all the nations engaged in the Seven Years' War, in Europe, America, Asia, and at sea, may have been as much as 800,000, though the figure can be little more than a guess. But it is unreasonable to compare the number guillotined

in Paris in twelve months, with the total loss, from all causes, of all nations, in a world-wide war which lasted more than six years.

"History confesses mournfully that there is no period to be met with in which the general Twenty-five millions of France suffered *less* than in this period which they name Reign of Terror." History declares precisely the opposite, that the population of France was more miserable during the Terror than it had been during the *ancien régime*. Carlyle himself provides the proof of his own mistake, without perceiving what he is doing. He says that "the death of Robespierre was a signal at which great multitudes of men, struck dumb with terror heretofore, rose out of their hiding-places: and, as it were, saw one another, how multitudinous they were and began speaking and complaining. They are countable by the thousand and the million; who have suffered cruel wrong." The fall of Robespierre was hailed with joy by the whole nation because the system he represented, the Terror, had become intolerable.

Seeing the hand of God throughout, Carlyle applauded whatever was done by the revolutionists, under His inspiration and guidance. His book is thus a panegyric of crime, and its influence has been to encourage acts of violence and cruelty. If he had been alive at the time of the Revolution he would have found excuses for all the atrocities; for he does so in his book. The conclusion is unavoidable. One hesitates to suppose that he would have given his blessing to the Bolshevist massacres in Russia; but there stands his written word, and the Russian executioners can appeal to it in support of their barbarities.

Two years after the publication of this book there appeared, in the *London and Westminster Review*, October 1839, an article on Carlyle, written by John Sterling, his friend and admirer. It contained discriminating appreciation of the merits of his teacher, which gladdened the heart of Carlyle. But with regard to his approval of the September massacres, Sterling said: "O! shame,

shame to use the wonderful power of words for thus darkening men's plainest and holiest knowledge. The difference is not in many or few, custom or no custom, hodden or scarlet, but in the souls, the purposes, the feelings of the men who do the deed." The murders were "A new and peculiar fact, sufficient to appal every man not too near the brutes for even the dimmest meditation."

And here are the lines written by Wordsworth, "In allusion to various recent Histories and Notices of the French Revolution."

> Portentous change, when History can appear
> As the cool Advocate of foul device;
> Reckless audacity extol, and jeer
> At consciences perplexed with scruples nice!
> They who bewail not, most abhor, the sneer
> Born of Conceit, Power's blind Idolater;
> Or happily sprung from vaunting Cowardice,
> Betrayed by mockery of holy fear.
> Hath it not long been said the wrath of Man
> Works not the righteousness of God? Oh, bend,
> Bend, ye Perverse! to judgments from on High,
> Laws that lay under Heaven's perpetual ban
> All principles of action that transcend
> The sacred limits of humanity.

CHAPTER XVI

" CHARTISM "

THE son of a working man, Carlyle had heard much talk in his home about the conditions of labour. His father used to say that the lot of the poor had become much worse in his lifetime. His mother could see nothing but disaster ahead. Carlyle had listened to many gloomy prognostications, in his youth. In the autumn of 1839 he wrote an article on " The Working Classes," which he submitted to J. G. Lockhart, editor of the *Quarterly Review*, but Lockhart, though sympathetic, said he dared not print it. Then Mill offered to publish it in the last issue of the *London and Westminster Review*, for that journal was about to come to an end. Mrs. Carlyle objected that what her husband had written deserved a better fate. In the end it was published as a pamphlet with the title " Chartism," in December 1839.

When Carlyle was born, in 1795, the industrial revolution was fairly under way. It began in the early years of George III. Up to that time the centre of English country life had been the village. The arable land near the village was cut into long strips, not separated by hedges, somewhat like large modern allotments.[1] The strips were of various sizes ; a number of strips, separated from each other, might be cultivated by one farmer, but there were many small-holders. The manner of cultivation was laid down by the local custom and tradition, a conservative influence which militated against the introduction of improved methods. In the neighbourhood was the common, over which the owners of arable land had rights of pasture. The women and children, and the men also

[1] *British History in the Nineteenth Century*, by G. M. Trevelyan, 1922.

when field work was over, employed their time supplying whatever was needed in their own homes or in the village, in the way of clothing, basket work, furniture; and they produced the cloth which purchasers from the towns carried away on pack horses. There was little desire for accumulation of wealth, and no wish for any radical alteration of conditions.

The excessive sub-division of the land caused inconvenience and waste in working. With, or without, the sanction of an Act of Parliament, the commons were enclosed, freed from the general rights of user; the land was given to those who had lost these rights. Then the squire began to buy out the small-holder. Substantial tenant farms took the place of the scattered village holdings. The French War made it a matter of importance that the land should produce as much as possible. Large estates meant superior cultivation and increased production; they helped to defeat Napoleon.

Means of communication improved. Brindley built canals. Some years later Macadam transformed the roads, making them fit for carriage and coach traffic in places where pack horses had hitherto been employed. This was a centralising influence, giving increased power to those who controlled wealth.

While this revolution in agriculture was in progress, cottage labour underwent an analogous change. Labour-saving machinery was invented, and large factories were established, with which the family in the cottage could not compete. The village population began to migrate into the manufacturing towns.

The war, and a succession of bad harvests, caused a great rise in the price of food. Then was begun the system of giving doles to the poor, out of the rates, which pauperised the whole country. After twenty years of war the change to peace, in 1815, produced economic difficulties which were slow to pass away. The factory system, in the new condition of peace, took time to adjust itself. Periods of full work were liable, by over-production of goods, to be followed by no work at all, until the surplus had been

disposed of. Employment became spasmodic, for the manufacturer dismissed his workmen when a glut occurred.

With the changed conditions came changes of opinion. Previously the poor man had belonged to a community in which he enjoyed both independence and guidance. He had been a recognised member of the local society; his welfare had been the concern of all. Now he became an isolated unit, who might at any moment be turned adrift to starve. It was believed that this was inevitable and could not be remedied. The assertion of Malthus was accepted that a chronic condition of over-population was an incurable necessity. Bentham and his followers taught that the health and prosperity of the community depended upon free competition, and a policy of *laissez-faire*, of leaving things to right themselves by the natural law of supply and demand.

The Reform Parliament passed the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834, which put an end to the system of doles. Workhouses were built; those who declined to enter them were left to find work and subsistence themselves. The result was to limit pauperism and increase poverty. In *Oliver Twist* (1838) Dickens forced the subject upon the attention of the public. Probably this book influenced Carlyle to write.

The Reform Parliament made the first breach in the principle of *laissez-faire*, by passing, in 1833, a Factory Act which made it illegal to employ children for more than nine hours a day. Inspectors were appointed to see that the law was carried out.

But the condition of the poor became steadily worse; unemployment, and the low wages which it produced, owing to the unrestricted competition in the labour market, caused deep distress. The general discontent found expression in the Anti-Corn Law League and the Chartist Association. The League agitated for the abolition of the duty on corn, the Chartists demanded the political franchise.

It was in these circumstances that, in 1839, Carlyle embarked upon his first political pamphlet. He called it "Chartism" but the Chartists are scarcely mentioned.

He was not in sympathy with the Chartist demand for an extension of the franchise that would give Labour the control of Parliament. His pamphlet was repudiated by the Chartists, who declared that he did not understand what Chartism meant. The first chapter of the pamphlet is headed, "Condition-of-England Question"—a phrase which is still remembered—and that, not Chartism, is its subject.

The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 received the qualified approval of Carlyle. It was "harsh but salutary." Though heretical and damnable as a whole truth "it is orthodox and laudable as a *half*-truth; and was imperatively required to be put in practice. . . . In fact, if we look at the old Poor Law, in its assertion of the opposite social principle, that Fortune's awards are *not* those of Justice, we shall find it to have become still more unsupportable, demanding, if England was not destined for speedy anarchy, to be done away with. Any law, however well meant as a law, which has become a bounty on unthrift, idleness, bastardy and beer-drinking, must be put an end to. In all ways it needs, especially in these times, to be proclaimed aloud that for the idle man there is no place in this England of ours. He that will not work, and save according to his means, let him go elsewhither. . . . We define the harsh New Poor-Law to *be* withal a 'protection of the thrifty labourer against the thriftless and dissolute'; a thing inexpressibly important; a *half*-result, detestable, if you will, when looked upon as the whole result; yet without which the whole result is forever unattainable. . . . We will praise the New Poor-Law, farther, as the probable preliminary of *some* general charge to be taken of the lowest classes by the higher. . . . Supervisal by the central Government" was begun.

The refusal of out-door relief to the able-bodied was welcomed by Carlyle as a protection of the honest and able workman. The new Law showed at least that the Government was trying to do something "in a matter in regard to which if something be not done, something will *do* itself one day, and in a fashion that will please nobody."

Competition among the employers, as well as among the workmen, was necessary in order that the most capable should rise to the top. "Conquest, which seems mere wrong and force, everywhere asserts itself as a right among men. Yet if we examine, we shall find that, in this world, no conquest could ever become permanent, which did not withal show itself beneficial to the conquered as well as to the conquerors. . . . How *can-do*, if we will well interpret it, unites itself with *shall-do* among mortals; how strength acts ever as the right arm of justice; how might and right, so frightfully discrepant at first, are ever in the long-run one and the same—is a cheering consideration. . . . The rights of man, as has been not unaptly remarked, are little worth ascertaining in comparison to the *mights* of man—to what portion of his rights he has any chance of being able to make good! . . . Might and Right do differ frightfully from hour to hour; but give them centuries to try it in, they are found to be identical.

"No property is eternal but God the Maker's; whom Heaven permits to take possession, his is the right; Heaven's sanction *is* such permission—while it lasts; nothing more can be said. . . . The strong thing is the just thing; this thou wilt find throughout in our world; —as indeed was God and Truth the Maker of our world, or was Satan and Falsehood?

"Accidental all these things and persons look, unexpected everyone of them to man. Yet inevitable every one of them; foreseen, not unexpected, by Supreme Power; prepared, appointed from afar."

The people have the right to be governed by those who have the might to govern them. "Government of the under classes by the upper on a principle of *Let-alone* is no longer possible in England in these days. . . . The Working Classes cannot any longer go on without Government; without being *actually* guided and governed. . . . 'Guide me, govern me! I am mad and miserable, and cannot guide myself!' Surely of all 'rights of man,' this right of the ignorant man to be guided by the wiser, to be, gently or forcibly, led in the true course by him, is the

indisputablest. . . . Not towards the impossibility, 'Self-Government' of a multitude by a multitiude; but towards some possibility, government by the wisest, does bewildered Europe struggle.

"To believe practically that the poor and luckless are here only as a nuisance to be abraded and abated, and in some permissible manner made away with, and swept out of sight, is not an amiable faith. . . . Vain is it to think that the misery of one class, of the great universal under class, can be isolated, and kept apart and penalised, down in that class.

"All men, we must repeat, were made by God, and have immortal souls in them. The Sanspotato is of the selfsame stuff as the superfinest Lord Lieutenant. Not an individual Sanspotato human scarecrow but had a Life given him out of Heaven, with Eternities depending on it, for once and no second time. With Immensities in him, over him and round him; with feelings which a Shakespeare's speech would not utter; with desires illimitable as the Autocrats of all the Russias!"

The claim of the poor labourer is for something quite other than "never so liberal parish doles, or to be lodged in free and easy workhouses when distress overtakes him; not for this, however in words he may clamour for it; not for this, but for something far different does the heart of him struggle. It is 'for justice' that he struggles; for 'just wages,'—not in money alone! An ever-toiling inferior, he would fain (though as yet he knows it not) find for himself a superior that should lovingly and wisely govern: is not that too the 'just wages' of his service done! It is for a manlike place and relation, in this world where he sees himself a man, that he struggles.

"It is not what a man outwardly has or wants that constitutes the happiness or misery of him. Nakedness, hunger, distress of all kinds, death itself have been cheerfully suffered, when the heart was right. It is the feeling of *injustice* that is insupportable to all men. . . . It is not the outward pain of injustice; that, were it even the flaying of the back with knotted scourges, the severing of

the head with guillotines, is comparatively a small matter. The real smart is the soul's pain and stigma, the hurt inflicted on the moral self."

Here Carlyle was touching upon matters of which he had personal knowledge. We do not, perhaps, appreciate the bitterness of the sense of inferiority, of being outside the ruling social order, which is felt by those born in a low station of life. They can endure poverty, but not exclusion from the consultations of the educated and the drawing-rooms of the fashionable. They know too well, they can never forget, that they are not cultured, nor well-mannered. How terrible is this consciousness only an exceptional man, such as Carlyle, is in a position to reveal. And his career is a striking illustration of the danger of rising into a sphere above that in which one is reared; where the applauses of the great and the songs of the sirens overthrow the accustomed checks and balances, and give egotism and vanity an unrestrained gallop.

Equality, not liberty, nor comfort, is what the poor want. They envy Crœsus, though he could not buy a penny newspaper nor an excursion ticket. The poor man has now what the wealthiest plutocrat could not have bought with all his money a hundred years ago. And yet he is more dissatisfied than ever. Wealth is now, more than it ever was in the comparatively stagnant past, a proof of superiority, and poverty the result of inferiority. It is the consciousness of this fact that maddens the unsuccessful, and leads to Socialism, and Communism, which are violent outbursts of the failures against a competition in which they have been worsted. Vanity and jealousy are at the root, not indigence; and the easier it is for the industrious apprentice to achieve a respectable position, the greater is the fury of the self-indulgent, or the incompetent, who fall behind. The enemy is not the capitalist but the energetic and able workman. Already in Carlyle's day some of these men were becoming the managers, and then the owners, of the new factories. They proved unsympathetic employers.

When Carlyle was writing, the doctrine of *laissez-faire*,

of unrestricted competition, without interference by the State, was being too strictly adhered to. His objection to it, as it existed in his time, was well founded. He insisted that men should not be treated as " hands," with no claim upon the employer beyond the cash-nexus. Hands belong to beings who have minds and feelings, like other men. It is not only food for the body that they need, but social recognition and human fellowship.

CHAPTER XVII

"HEROES"

IT will be remembered that when Carlyle went to London in 1831, with the manuscript of *Sartor Resartus* in his pocket, he hoped to give lectures there. The scheme came to nothing then, partly owing to the public preoccupation with the Reform Bill, partly because Carlyle had not acquired the necessary friends and influence. But he kept the idea of lecturing in his mind.

When the *French Revolution* was finished, but not yet published, early in 1837, his resources had fallen to a very low point. His desire to lecture, and his narrow means, were known ; and he had now a circle of influential friends who were able to help him. Miss Martineau, Miss Wilson, Leigh Hunt, Monckton Milnes, James Spedding, Henry Taylor, J. S. Mill, John Sterling, exerted themselves to obtain subscribers. In the end some two hundred persons, chiefly men of note and women of fashion, paid a guinea each for a course of six lectures on "German Literature." They were delivered, in May 1837, at Almack's. The net gain was £135. On returning from the last lecture with the money in his pocket, Carlyle had the pleasure of presenting his wife and his mother-in-law, who was then on a visit to Cheyne Row, with a sovereign each.

The lectures were a success both in delivery and in substance. There is no doubt that the Annandale accent, like Irving's before him, was an attraction, and that Carlyle knew it. The subject, "German Literature," was becoming fashionable. The *Spectator* said, "No person of taste or judgment could hear him without feeling that the lecturer is a man of genius, deeply imbued with his great

subject." He was known to be of humble origin, and was regarded with interest as something of a *lusus naturæ*. He obtained much the same triumph as Irving had done, when beauty and intellect crowded to his church.

The success of the *French Revolution* in 1837 brought a larger audience to the next course of lectures, in 1838. The subject then chosen was "The History of Literature or the Successive Periods of European Culture." Twelve lectures were delivered in May and June 1838 at the Marylebone Institution, Edward Street, Portman Square. The fee for the course was two guineas and the net profit £260, nearly double that of the previous year.

The substance of this course of lectures was published, from Carlyle's notes, by Edward Dowden, in the *Nineteenth Century*, May 1881.[1]

The history of culture is viewed as a succession of faiths interrupted by periods of scepticism. The saying of Goethe is quoted, that belief and unbelief are two opposite principles; when belief predominates occur great soul-stirring events, while periods of unbelief are unfertile and intrinsically mean.

We begin with the beliefs of Greece, in her great period. "Divination was the great nucleus round which polytheism formed itself—the constituted core of the whole matter. All people, private men as well as states, used to consult the oracles of Dodona or Delphi (which eventually became the most celebrated of all) on all the concerns of life. Modern travellers have discovered in those places pipes and other secret contrivances from which they have concluded that these oracles were constituted on a principle of falsehood and delusion. Cicero, too, said that he was certain two Augurs could not meet without laughing; and he was likely to know, for he had once been an Augur himself. But I confess that on reading Herodotus there appears to me to have been very little quackery about it. I can quite readily fancy that there was a great deal of reason in the oracle. The seat of that at Dodona was a

[1] See *Lectures on the History of Literature delivered by Thomas Carlyle*, by J. K. Greene, 1892. From notes taken during the lectures.

deep, dark chasm, into which the diviner entered when he sought the Deity. If he was a man of devout frame of mind, he must surely have then been in the best state of feeling for foreseeing the future, and giving advice to others. No matter how this was carried on—by divination or otherwise—so long as the individual suffered himself to be wrapt in union with a higher being. I like to believe better of Greece than that she was completely at the mercy of fraud and falsehood in these matters."

Carlyle thought that a devout man might be able to place himself in union with a higher being, and thus become the recipient of a message. Then it would be justifiable for him to use secret mechanical appliances for the delivery of the message, in order to impress the public with a conviction of its divine origin. Trickery may be permitted for such a purpose. The end justifies the means. That is one of the excuses brought forward for the ornate religious ceremonial which Carlyle had been taught to regard as a temptation of the Devil. But if a Greek priest might employ artificial aids why may not a modern Roman?

The pagan religions of Greece and Rome degenerated in the time of Seneca, said Carlyle, and were supplanted by the Christian faith. The whole of the Middle Age was a period of belief. It culminated in the Crusade movement, when Europe "believed in the invisible world, which surrounds the outward and visible world." Then came another age of unbelief, which was brought to an end by the Reformation. That in its turn gave way to Hume and Adam Smith, and the French sceptics of the eighteenth century, who prepared the way for the French Revolution. The next great period began in Germany. "On the spiritual side of things we see the phœnix in the modern school of German literature." Carlyle then repeated once more that Goethe had saved him from "the blackness and darkness of death," and enunciated again his erroneous version of Goethe's views on happiness.

The general idea of alternating periods, action followed by reaction, Carlyle's "belief and unbelief," is in accord

with what we know of growth, which proceeds by jumps and pauses.

But for the receipts from his lectures, Carlyle's financial position would have been desperate. The first money he received for the *French Revolution* came from Emerson, for the American edition, published in December 1837. On the 30th July, 1838, Emerson sent £50 from that source, a very welcome present, for such, as Carlyle gratefully acknowledged, it must be reckoned, Emerson having arranged the publication. In January 1839, he was able to send a further £100. In April 1839, Carlyle received for the second English edition £110, from Fraser.

It was still necessary to earn money by lecturing. In May 1839 Carlyle delivered a course of six lectures on "The Revolutions of Modern Europe." The net receipts were £200. The audience was even more distinguished and enthusiastic than in the previous years. The last lecture, on "Sansculottism," was reported by Leigh Hunt to have been the most interesting of the series.

The observation of Macready, who was present, may be quoted. He said that Carlyle spoke with "a fervour and eloquence that only complete conviction of truth can give." That explains much of the impressiveness of Carlyle. He was full of his subject, struggling to express what was in him, and had complete confidence in the truth and the importance of the message with which he was burdened. His very exaggeration enhanced the effect, for it revealed the warmth of his feelings.

The last course of lectures, on "Heroes," was delivered in May 1840. By this time reputation had come. The *French Revolution* in 1837, *Sartor Resartus* in 1838, the *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays* in 1839, *Chartism* in 1839, and the previous courses of lectures, had done their work. It had now become almost a necessity for every man of intellect and every woman of fashion, to listen to Carlyle, and to talk about him. Women always form the larger part of the audience at a lecture. One of them described Carlyle, during the Hero series, as follows: "He is a tall, robust-looking man; rugged simplicity

and indomitable strength are in his face, and such a glow of genius in it—not always smouldering there, but flashing from his beautiful grey eyes, from the remoteness of their deep setting under that massive brow. His manner is very quiet, but he speaks like one tremendously convinced of what he utters, and who had much—very much—in him that was quite unutterable, quite unfit to be uttered to the uninitiated ear."[1] Carlyle's manner gave the impression that he had sounded depths of knowledge, which the ordinary man or woman cannot hope to reach.

He gave six lectures. For the Hero as Divinity, he selected Odin; as Prophet, Mahomet; as Poet, Dante and Shakespeare; as Priest, Luther and Knox; as Man of Letters, Johnson, Rousseau, Burns; as King, Cromwell and Napoleon. These lectures, considerably enlarged by Carlyle, were published in April, 1841, in book form, with the attractive title, *On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History.*

The choice of names has been considered capricious, but Carlyle was entitled to choose any great man as an illustration of his principle; he was not required to grade excellences with arithmetical accuracy and speak only of those highest on the list. One of his aims was to be original, to attract attention, and in that he succeeded abundantly. He gave a needed impetus to the study of Norse literature; he changed opinion about Mahomet; encouraged the study of Dante; spoke up for Knox; did justice to Boswell; helped us to appreciate Johnson, the man; and led the applause for Burns. In these directions his influence is felt to this day; the splash was so tremendous that the ripples are still moving.

Carlyle's definition of a hero was expressed as follows: "There needs not a great soul to make a hero; there needs a God-created soul which will be true to its origin." The eleven persons whom he selected as illustrations of his doctrine were all, in his view, divinely inspired; they had

[1] *Extracts from the journals of Caroline Fox*, edited by H. N. Pym, 1882, p. 95.

a sincerity which came from God; they were sent into the world to enlighten and guide mankind.

As early as 1824 Carlyle had begun to praise famous men. In the Introduction to his translation of *Wilhelm Meister* the following passage occurs: "In looking at an extraordinary man, it were good for an ordinary man to be sure of *seeing* him, before attempting to *oversee* him. Having ascertained that Goethe is an object deserving study, it will be time to censure his faults when we have clearly established his merits; and if we are wise judges, not till then. . . . There is a maxim, far better known than practised, that to detect faults is a much lower occupation than to recognise merits." In the essay on Goethe, July 1828, Carlyle said: "For all right judgment of any man or thing, it is useful, nay, essential, to see his good qualities before pronouncing on his bad."

The capacity of seeing the good in every man or thing, is the greatest of all gifts. To have it is to be born with the real silver spoon in the mouth. No other present from a fairy godmother can equal it, neither wealth, health, nor ability. Without it, indeed, it is impossible to understand the world around us, or the life that is given us.

But Carlyle's "seeing before overseeing" was not grounded on these truths. He was preaching humility in the presence of the great. The Hero was to be worshipped, not examined. There was to be no "overseeing" at all.

In the first lecture, on Odin, he announced the principle which inspired the whole course: "The history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the History of the Great Men who have worked here. They were the leaders of men, these great ones; the modellers, patterns, and in a wide sense creators, of whatsoever the general mass of man contrived to do or to attain: all things that we see standing accomplished in the world are properly the outer material result, the practical realisation and embodiment of thoughts that dwelt in the Great Men sent into the world." He repeated several times the text of his sermon, "The History of the World, I said

already, was the Biography of Great Men." The assertion is too dogmatic. We know that some advances have been due to the initiative of great men, but that knowledge does not justify the claim that they have been the only agents of progress, or even the chief agents. The constant pressure of multitudes may well have achieved more than the spasmodic strength of giants.

" The great man, with his free force direct out of God's own hand, is the lightning out of Heaven that shall kindle dead fuel. The most precious gift that Heaven can give to the Earth ; a man of ' Genius ' as we call it : the Soul of a man actually sent down from the skies with a God's message to us."

" Through every star, through every blade of grass, is not God made visible ? . . . But now if all things whatsoever that we look upon are emblems to us of the Highest God, I add that more so than any of them is man such an emblem. . . . *We* are the miracle of miracles, the great inscrutable mystery of God. We cannot understand it, we know not how to speak of it ; but we may feel and know, if we like, that it is verily so. Well, these truths were once more readily felt than now. The young generations of the world, who had in them the freshness of young children, and yet the depth of earnest men, who did not think that they had finished-off all things in Heaven and Earth by merely giving them scientific names, but had to gaze direct at them there, with awe and wonder ; they felt better what of divinity is in man and Nature."

In *Sartor Resartus* he said, " Before no faintest revelation of the Godlike did he " (man) " ever stand irreverent, least of all when the Godlike showed itself revealed in his fellow men." In *Latter-day Pamphlets* he repeated this doctrine. " To the primitive man all Forces of Nature were divine . . . but especially the Noble Human Soul. . . . Hero-worship, as we call it, did among the ancient peoples, attract and subdue to itself all other forms of human worship."

Hero-worship, as Carlyle truly said, is natural to the primitive man, who is, like a child, ready to follow a

stronger person. Progress, however, consists in the growth of the inexperienced and incapable child into the self-directing adult; in the advance from submission to independence, from tyranny to democracy. The higher the society the less is it given to idolatry; admiration it must feel, but tempered by a cultivated understanding.

Carlyle's doctrine of Hero-worship was expressed in the language of philosophy, by Fichte, in the *Staatslehre*[1]: "In case of need, one single man has the right and duty to compel the whole of mankind. He may compel them to Right: for Right is an idea, absolute, definite, of universal validity, which they all *ought* to have: he has it, in virtue of the grace of God which works in him: he is armed with compulsion and appointed by God."

That is precisely the standpoint of Carlyle. The Hero alone has a living soul; he alone sees realities, pierces through shams. He has the right to compel the rest of mankind to follow him.

How are we to recognise the Hero? By being heroic, says Carlyle, but that is not helpful, for we are left to work our way to heroism without any guidance. Moreover, if we were ourselves heroic, we should be in no need of the assistance of other heroes. And if it is the mark of a Hero that he is a sincere man, how are we to recognise sincerity? There is, in fact, only one test of a Carlylean hero and that is success, the ultimate proof of divine inspiration.

In the first lecture, on Odin, Carlyle says that in the far distant past, "surely there was a First Teacher and Captain, surely there must have been an Odin, palpable to the sense at one time; no adjective but a real Hero of flesh and blood. . . . Odin was a heroic Prince in the Black Sea Region, with Twelve Peers, and a great people straitened for room. How he led these *Asen* (Asiatics) of his out of Asia; settled them in the North parts of Europe, by warlike conquest; invented Letters, Poetry and so forth,—and came by and by to be worshipped as chief God by these Scandinavians, his Twelve Peers made into Twelve Sons of his own, Gods like himself. . . . This

[1] *Carlyle and his German Masters*, by C. E. Vaughan, 1910, p. 194.

Odin, in his wild Norse vesture, with his wild beard and eyes, his rude Norse speech and ways, was a man like us. . . . We will fancy him to be the Type Norseman; the finest Teuton whom that race had yet produced."

These Asiatic Norsemen were earnest, rude, rugged, like Carlyle himself. He uses often such phrases as "early earnest times . . . the ancient earnest soul . . . deep, rude, earnest minds . . . a great rude simplicity . . . the rude Norse heart . . . a rude childlike way . . . indomitable rugged energy . . . rude but earnest." All primitive people are not rude, rugged, and earnest. Some are polite, gentle, and frivolous.

"Destiny inexorable, which it is useless trying to bend or soften, has appointed who is to be slain; this was a fundamental point for the Norse believers;—as indeed it is for all earnest men everywhere, for a Mahomet, a Luther, for a Napoleon too. It lies at the basis this for every such men; it is the woof out of which his whole system of thought is woven."

The belief in fate was an essential part of Carlyle. He expressed it often, in his writings and in his correspondence, when he was young and when he was old. In the second volume of his *Frederick the Great*, published in 1858, when Carlyle had reached the age of sixty-two, he says that Frederick, when Crown Prince, adopted the same principle, and that his father tried to beat it out of him. "The heresy about Predestination, or the 'Frei Gnadenwahl (Election by Free Grace),' as his Majesty terms it, according to which a man is pre-appointed from all Eternity either to salvation or the opposite (which is Fritz's notion, and indeed is Calvin's and that of many benighted creatures, *this Editor among them*),[1] appears to His Majesty an altogether shocking one."

He tilts at his windmills again. "The power of *Fire*, or Flame, for instance, which we designate by some trivial chemical name, thereby hiding from ourselves the essential character of wonder that dwells in it as in all things, is with these Norsemen, Loke, a most swift subtle *Demon*,

[1] Italics not in the original.

of the brood of the Iötuns. . . . From us too no Chemistry if it had not Stupidity to help it, would hide that Flame is a wonder. What is Flame? . . . *Rime* was not then as now a dead chemical thing, but a living Iötun or Devil. . . . Thunder was not then mere Electricity, vitreous or resinous; it was the God Donner . . . the Sun, beautifullest of visible things; wondrous too, and divine still, after all our Astronomies and Almanacs!"

There is more, not less, reverence for nature in the chemist, the electrician, the astronomer, than in the savage who is content to give to flame, thunder, sun, the attributes of gods.

The next lecture, "The Hero as Prophet: Mahomet," was one of Carlyle's triumphs. He vindicated Mahomet—and afterwards Cromwell—from the extravagant charges of dishonesty and ambition which were then current. It may be, indeed, that it was this success with Mahomet that led him to write about Cromwell.

"I should say sincerity, a deep, great, genuine sincerity, is the first characteristic of all men in any way heroic. . . . I do not assert Mahomet's continual sincerity: who is continually sincere? But I confess I can make nothing of the critic, in these times, who would accuse him of deceit *prepense*, of conscious deceit generally, or perhaps at all;—still more, of living in a mere element of conscious deceit, and writing this Koran as a forger and juggler would have done!"

Being in communion with God, the world's triumphs and rewards could be nothing to Mahomet. "Ambition? What could all Arabia do for this man—with the crown of Greek Heraclius, of Persian Chosroes, and all crowns in the Earth—what could they all do for him? It was not of the Earth he wanted to hear tell; it was of the Heaven above and of the Hell beneath."

If he had the power to spread his religion by force he was justified in doing so. "The sword indeed: but where will you get your sword! Every new opinion, at its starting, is precisely in a *minority of one*. In one man's head alone, there it dwells as yet. One man alone of the whole world

believes it; there is one man against all men. That *he* take a sword, and try to propagate with that, will do little good for him. You must first get your sword. On the whole, a thing will propagate itself as it can. We do not find, of the Christian Religion either, that it always disdained the sword, when once it had got one. Charlemagne's conversion of the Saxons was not by preaching. I care little about the sword; I will allow a thing to struggle for itself in this world, with any sword or tongue or implement it has, or can lay hold of. We will let it preach and pamphleteer, and fight, and to the uttermost bestir itself, and do, beak and claws, whatsoever is in it; very sure that it will, in the long run, conquer nothing which does not deserve to be conquered. What is better than itself, it cannot put away, but only what is worse. In this great Duel, Nature herself is umpire, and can do no wrong: the thing which is deepest-rooted in Nature, what we call *truest*, that thing and not the other will be found growing at last. . . . Man does hereby become the high-priest of this Temple of a World. He is in harmony with the Decrees of the Author of this World; co-operating with them, not vainly withstanding them: I know, to this day, no better definition of Duty than that same. All that is *right* includes itself in this of co-operating with the real Tendency of the World: you succeed by this (The World's Tendency will succeed), you are good, and in the right course there."

Those whose conduct is in harmony with the decrees of the Author of this World, who live in accord with the Tendency of the World, will succeed "in the long run." But what is a long run? To take a concrete example: are we to say that Frederick the Great's conquest of Silesia and partition of Poland were successes in the long run? "I say sometimes that all goes by wager of battle in this world; that *strength*, well understood, is the measure of all worth. Give a thing time; if it can succeed, it is a right thing." But if centuries of time are needed the principle is not helpful as a guide to conduct.

In the next lecture, on Dante and Shakespeare, Carlyle

forgot, for the moment, one of his favourite doctrines, that a poet will speak in spite of all obstructions. He says now that a poet is not "irrepressible," but may be silenced by a mere accident. "Had all gone right with Dante," he says, "he might have been Prior, Podesta, or whatever they call it, of Florence, well accepted among neighbours —and the world had wanted one of the most notable words ever spoken or sung. Florence would have had another prosperous Lord Mayor; and the ten dumb centuries continued voiceless, and the ten other listening centuries (for there will be ten of them and more) had no *Divina Commedia* to hear!"

While in this temporary frame of mind Carlyle made a similar statement about Shakespeare. "Curious enough, how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakespeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man!"

"Find a man," said Carlyle, "whose words paint you a likeness, you have found a man worth something; mark his manner of doing it, as very characteristic of him. In the first place, he could not have discerned the object at all, or seen the vital type of it, unless he had, what we call, sympathised with it—had sympathy in him to bestow on objects."

That is a fine saying. And here is another: "We are all poets when we *read* a poem well."

For the Hero as "Man of Letters," Carlyle chose Johnson, Rousseau, and Burns. In this lecture there was much repetition of what he had often said already, that the Hero is he who sees the "Reality which lies at the bottom of all Appearance"; and that the eighteenth century was a barren period of unbelief. We are told again that Johnson was "rugged," that he had "a giant invincible soul," and are reminded of "his great Gospel, 'Clear your mind of Cant.'"

Rousseau was not a strong, or a truly great man, but "he has the first and chief characteristic of a Hero: he is heartily *in earnest.* In earnest, if ever man was." He had "the ineradicable feeling and knowledge that this Life of ours is true: not a Scepticism, Theorem, or Persiflage, but a Fact, an awful Reality."

Burns, of course, was "rugged." He is likened to Mirabeau. "They differ widely in vesture; yet look at them intrinsically. There is the same burly thick-necked strength of body as of soul." Carlyle seems really to have believed that there could not be a great soul in a small body.

A great man is great in every direction. "Burns too could have governed, debated in National Assemblies; politicised, as few could." His ability might have "made itself visible to all men, in managing of Kingdoms, in ruling of great ever-memorable epochs!" Burns might have been Mirabeau and Mirabeau might have been Burns. Indeed Burns was Mirabeau and Mirabeau was Burns.

"For at bottom the Great Man, as he comes from the hand of Nature, is ever the same kind of thing; Odin, Luther, Johnson, Burns; I hope to make it appear that these are all originally of one stuff; that only by the world's reception of them, and the shapes they assume, are they so immeasurably diverse. The Hero can be Poet, Prophet, King, Priest, or what you will, according to the kind of world he finds himself born into. I confess, I have no notion of a truly great man that could not be *all* sorts of men."

Genius, it would seem, is, like Royalty, a class by itself, all of one stuff. The life of this superstition, at least as regards genius, if not Royalty, has been prolonged by the support of Carlyle.

The last lecture, "The Hero as King," consisted of a panegyric on Cromwell, with a digression to Johnson, and a few remarks at the end about Napoleon. The King is "the summary for us of *all* the various figures of Heroism," for he is not merely Priest and Prophet, he is "to command over us." The great problem of society is to discover the ablest man and give him the control of affairs. "Find in

any country the Ablest Man that exists there; *raise him* to the supreme place, and loyally reverence him; you have a perfect government for that country. . . . I say, Find me the true Könning, King, or able-man, and he *has* a divine right over me."

Each man should, in every action of his life, follow his superior and guide his inferior. But the statement of something so self-evident, without any reference to the equally obvious difficulty of grading mankind, so that we should all find ourselves in our true position, is not helpful.

"With regard to Cromwell's 'lying,' we will make one remark. . . . He was, cry they, the chief of liars. But now, intrinsically, is not all this the inevitable fortune, not of a false man in such times, but simply of a superior man. Such a man must have reticences in him.

"Cromwell, no doubt of it, spoke often in the dialect of small subaltern parties; uttered to them a *part* of his mind. Each little party thought him all its own. Hence their rage, one and all, to find him not of their party, but of his own party! Was it his blame? At all seasons of his history he must have felt, among such people, how, if he explained to them the deeper insight he had, they must either have shuddered aghast at it, or believing it, their own little compact hypothesis must have gone wholly to wreck. . . . 'I might have my hand full of truth' said Fontenelle, 'and open only my little finger.'"

These are the ordinary excuses put forward on behalf of the deliberate and intentional misinformation, that is, of falsehood, direct or indirect, perpetrated by men in high positions. Carlyle taught that a hero must use deceit. Cromwell was the recipient, at God's hands, of such startling truths, that he had to keep them concealed for fear of spreading consternation among the pigmies about him. He was like "The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan," in *Lalla Rookh*:

> O'er his features hung
> The Veil, the Silver Veil, which he had flung
> In mercy there, to hide from mortal sight
> His dazzling brow, till men could bear its light.

Cromwell found it difficult to express what was in him. "With that rude passionate voice of his, he was always understood to *mean* something, and men wished to know what . . . To himself the internal meaning was sun-clear; but the material with which he was to clothe it in utterance was not there. . . . Poor Cromwell,—great Cromwell! The inarticulate Prophet; Prophet, who could not *speak*. Rude, confused, struggling to utter himself, with his savage depth, with his wild sincerity; and he looked so strange, among the elegant Euphemisms, dainty little Falklands, didactic Stillingworths, diplomatic Clarendons." His inability to speak plainly, proved the depth of his thought.

Carlyle's demand for *Silence*, generally italicised, or enlarged to SILENCE, is one of the best-known of his peculiarities. That he was himself one of the most garrulous of men is a piquant reflection. In this lecture he describes Johnson, who is known to us for his talk, as "the great silent Samuel." "The noble silent men, scattered here and there, each in his department; silently thinking, silently working; whom no Morning Newspaper makes mention of! They are the salt of the earth. . . . Silence, the great Empire of Silence; higher than the Stars; deeper than the Kingdoms of Death! It alone is great; all else is small. I hope we English will long maintain our *grand talent pour le silence*."

And yet speech is superior to silence, as action is to inaction. Even foolish speech may produce something, whereas silence—the easy refuge of the coward—is barren and hopeless. A live gudgeon is worth more than a dead emperor.

The "mournful silent Samuel" would have "flamed up into a divine clearness, into noble utterance" if he had become convinced that "the perfect Heavenly Law might be made law in this world; that the prayer be prayed daily, 'Thy Kingdom come' was at length to be fulfilled!" But when asked for guidance he "will answer, 'I am *continent* of my thought hitherto, happily I have yet had the ability to keep it in me, no compulsion strong enough

to speak it. My "system" is not for promulgation first of all; it is for serving myself to live by. That is the great purpose of it to me.' "

Cromwell and Johnson were great, and therefore silent. Cromwell knew that the truth would only upset men's minds; and yet he tried to speak, and did his utmost to make his meaning clear, in spite of the danger to listeners; but owing to the greatness of his soul, he could not express himself. Johnson never spoke; his dogged silence was due to the conviction that nobody would listen to him, and also to the determination to keep his great thoughts for his own delectation and advantage.

One peculiarity of the elect is that the divine spirit has to struggle for emergence from the human body, which suffers in the process. Hence the hypochondria, and the obscure utterances, which are proofs of God's presence in a man. Carlyle himself had the affectations of the Scottish ministers of his day, with their melancholy tone, and pose of humility. He gave his hearers the outpourings from a bosom surcharged, struggling to express itself, with a deep catch or sigh; it was the voice of God speaking through him which he, unworthy, was striving to utter.

At the close of this—the last—lecture Carlyle told his audience that he had enjoyed the lecturing, and regretted its termination. "Here finally these wide roamings of ours through so many times and places, in search and study of Heroes, are to terminate. I am sorry for it: there was pleasure for me in this business, if also much pain." The remark is instructive when one remembers what he said later. "'Detestable mixture of prophecy and play-actorism,' as I sorrowfully defined it: nothing could well be hatefuller to me," he wrote in 1866. But he enjoyed lecturing. He declared often that the one thing necessary for his happiness was to speak and be heard. His conversation was like the overflow of a torrent which was bursting over obstacles. The desire for self-expression was very strong in Carlyle. What he disliked was the financial necessity. The lecturing was a pleasure; the compulsion to do it a pain.

The lectures closed with words of thanks to his audience: "Often enough, with these abrupt utterances thrown-out isolated, unexplained, has your tolerance been put to the trial. Tolerance, patient candour, all-hoping favour and kindness, which I will not speak of at present. The accomplished and distinguished, the beautiful, the wise, something of what is best in England, have listened patiently to my rude words. With many feelings, I heartily thank you all; and say, Good be with you all!"

In an extempore lecture a headlong speaker will perpetrate blunders, but Carlyle spent months in writing his book from the notes he had prepared for the lectures, and he should have discovered its numerous misreadings of authorities, errors of etymology and of fact. The number of the mistakes that he failed to correct is considerable.

Though Hero-worship means reverence rather than imitation, many have been spurred on by Carlyle's eloquence to try to make their lives sublime. Ruskin declared that his life had been changed by Carlyle's exhortations. Others could have said the same. There can hardly be any more potent incentive to become worthy of our creation than the reflections which Carlyle aroused by his solemn and impressive words.

But there are other tendencies which his presentation of Hero-worship has encouraged. There was no sympathy in him for the achievement of Rome—*parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.* On the contrary, he would inflate the proud and scorn the subjected. With his appreciation of greatness went the most supreme contempt for the bulk of mankind. "No sadder proof," he said, "can be given by a man of his own littleness than disbelief in great men." But when it came to contemporaries, that is, rivals, Carlyle was as little as it was possible to be. His influence went to accentuate, rather than diminish, the jealousies and spites of literary men. For the great men of the past, who could not be regarded as personal rivals, Carlyle held that our attitude should be subservient to the point of idolatry. He interfered with the right and duty of every man to think for himself; his influence was that of the

schoolmaster of his day, against independence of thought. Goethe's reverence for all that is above, beneath, and around us, for all creation, became in Carlyle adoration of the famous man.

Carlylean Hero-worship stimulated the egotism of the individual whose admiration for the great is a form of self-laudation; for there is a subtle gratification to be derived from indulgence in idolatrous practices. The worshipper seeks to identify himself with his God, to join the Deity in looking down upon the rest of mankind.

But the reader who makes the best of Carlyle, and, ignoring much of what he said, vibrates in response to the resonance of his voice, will be filled with thankfulness for the fine spirits who come among us, to raise the dignity of mankind. We are, as Carlyle said, the miracle of miracles, and the gifted man is our highest expression.

CHAPTER XVIII

SONGS OF SIRENS

WITH the success of the *French Revolution* fame had come at last. Naturally Carlyle was elated. He wrote to John, 7th November, 1837, that his life was streaked with wild gleamings of a very strange joy. He was thankful to say that the coming of fame could not do him much mischief.

The desire for fame was driven underground by the religion in which Carlyle had been reared, which taught that all praise was a temptation of the Devil. There had been much talk in the Ecclefechan household of the danger of fame, long before any occasion for apprehension had arisen. A certain measure of hypocrisy was inevitable in the effort to decry that which was, very properly, desired. Allan Cunningham told Miss Martineau that all Carlyle needed for restoration to health was fame ; and Miss Martineau declared that as Carlyle's reputation increased his health improved. The real danger was that, if fame were to come, the reaction against a false and inhuman doctrine might be excessive ; that the normal checks and balances might be broken down.

The peril for Carlyle lay not so much in popular applause, for he despised ordinary public opinion, but in the praises of the social and intellectual leaders of the day. He had already diagnosed the ailment, without adequate evidence, in the case of Edward Irving. He believed that the attendance of Lady Jersey, and her world, at the Hatton Garden Chapel, had demoralised Irving, while the larger congregation of less exalted persons, who filled his new church, had failed to disturb his equanimity. Carlyle jumped to that conclusion because he was conscious that

the siren voice of a lady of fashion would have drawn him on to the rocks. Now he was destined to undergo the ordeal.

In March 1838 the Carlyles went to an "At Home," in Downing Street, given by Lady Theodosia Spring-Rice, wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Miss Spring-Rice had attended Carlyle's lectures on German literature. In the *Reminiscences* he says: "By this time we were getting noticed by select individuals of the Aristocracy; and were what is called 'rather rising in society.' Ambition that way my Jane never had; but she took it always as a something of honour done to me, and had her various bits of satisfaction in it."

On a horse given him by Marshall, one of his wealthy admirers, Carlyle became one of the frequenters of Rotten Row. He did the fashionable things, going to breakfasts, dinners, and routs. Mrs. Carlyle was not always invited with her husband. In the *Reminiscences*, Carlyle describes his wife as "taking no manner of offence not to participate in my lionings, but behaving like the royal soul she was, I, dullard egoist, taking no special recognition of such nobleness, till the bar was quite passed, or even not fully then! Alas, I see it now (perhaps better than I ever did!)." Mrs. Oliphant, an intimate friend of Mrs. Carlyle, after quoting the above passage, says, "Yet with a little humourous twitch at the corner of her eloquent mouth she would tell sometimes of the fine people who left her out in their invitations, as the great man's insignificant wife."[1]

Next year, in February 1839, Carlyle dined with Mr. and Lady Harriet Baring. Mr. Baring was the heir to the Ashburton Peerage. Lady Harriet, afterwards Lady Ashburton, was one of the leaders of society.

In March 1840 Carlyle dined with the Stanleys of Alderley in a very aristocratic company—Lord and Lady Holland, Lord Normanby, etc.—and remained for the soirée, when other notables arrived, Lords Morpeth and Lansdowne, Guizot, etc. This year he made the

[1] *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1881.

acquaintance of three men who were to be among his real friends—Dickens, Thirlwall, and Tennyson. The man who could draw to himself such divergent natures must have had engaging qualities. Already Carlyle knew everybody of note, and was loved and admired by many persons, both great and small.

It was in the summer of this year, 1840, that he founded the London Library. He could not afford to buy all the books he required, and disliked working in the British Museum Library. A library from which books of a serious nature could be borrowed and taken home was much needed. A committee of notable persons was formed at a meeting on the 24th June, 1840. There were present, with Lord Eliot in the chair, Lords Montague, Howick, and Lyttelton, with Milman, Milnes, Cornewall Lewis, John Forster, Helps, Bulwer, Gladstone, James Spedding, George Venables. Carlyle made an excellent speech ; he had many of the gifts of the orator. He said that a good book was the purest essence of a human soul ; a man cannot read it with the bustle of other people about him. We owe to his exertions an admirable library for students, who can take good books home to read at their leisure.

This year, instead of his usual visit to Scotland, Carlyle undertook, in the summer of 1840, a riding tour on "Citoyenne," before giving up the horse on account of the expense. He went to Leatherhead, to see the Bullers, and then to Hurstmonceau, where he stayed with the rector, Julius Hare. John Sterling, now very intimate with Carlyle, had been for a time Hare's curate. The long rides would have been exhausting to most men. One day, after what he called a sleepless night, Carlyle rode fifty miles, without undue fatigue.

Early in 1841, Miss Geraldine Jewsbury, of Manchester, called at Cheyne Row ; she became the most intimate of Mrs. Carlyle's friends. Nearly every summer Carlyle went to Scotland to visit his mother. This year he went twice. He started in April, visiting Milnes, on the way, at Fryston Hall, Yorkshire. Thence he went on to the

Marshalls at Headingley, near Leeds, and to Liverpool, and by steamer to Annan. He returned to Cheyne Row on the 5th May. In June he went north again, to Scotsbrig. In July Mrs. Carlyle joined him in a furnished house at Newby, near Annan, which they had taken for a month. They returned to Cheyne Row in September.

On the 25th February, 1842, Mrs. Welsh, who had for some time been in poor health, died unexpectedly. Mrs. Carlyle had reached the house of her uncle John Welsh, at Liverpool, when she learned that her mother was already dead. She herself was quite broken down and unfit to travel farther. The sympathy she received from her cousins Helen and Jeannie Welsh, made her ever after grateful to them. Jeannie, the younger, nicknamed Babbie, went to Cheyne Row with Mrs. Carlyle in March, and remained there till the following October. Thenceforth, until Babbie married, in 1855, there was a continuous correspondence between Mrs. Carlyle and her cousin, who was eighteen years her junior. Mrs. Carlyle's letters to her are among the best she wrote, perhaps because, as she said in one of them, her young cousin had become "my *friend*—my *sister*—the one being alive that I can turn to in every word with assurance that neither her kindness nor her sympathy will fail me." Mrs. Carlyle came nearer to opening her heart to Babbie than to any other person. The letters written under this stimulus, by a woman who had a natural gift of letter-writing, have few equals in the English language.

The reflection that she had not always been kind to her mother gave Mrs. Carlyle much distress. She experienced, for the rest of her life, bitter remorse, feelings very similar to those to which Carlyle gave such poignant expression when he had to lament his failings towards her.

The income from Craigenputtock now came to Carlyle, through his wife. Thenceforth, with the returns from his books, he was free from anxiety about money. He went to Templand to make the necessary legal arrangements, and thence to Scotsbrig. There he came across a genealogical work—*Collection for a History of the Ancient Family*

of Carlisles, 1822. He wrote to his wife that he had discovered what an illustrious genealogy he had. "I suppose I, too, must have been meant for a Duke, but the means were dropped in the passage."

It is strange how proud we all are of descent, rather than of ascent.

On the way back from Scotland, Carlyle went to Rugby to stay with Arnold, the famous headmaster. Carlyle was at the time studying the life of Cromwell, and Arnold offered to take him to the field of Naseby, in the neighbourhood. Arnold had been much impressed by the *French Revolution* and *Chartism*. The drive to Naseby, fifteen miles, in Arnold's company, and the battlefield itself, were long remembered by Carlyle. Arnold died a few weeks later.

This year, for the first time, Carlyle gave his wife a present on her birthday, the 14th July. Thenceforth he did the same at every anniversary. Her estate was now his, and he desired to make some acknowledgment. He knew that his wife missed her mother's always remembered birthday gift.

Mrs. Carlyle wrote to Babbie Welsh that her husband had given her a smelling bottle, which he had chosen himself, in a shop—though he "dislikes nothing in the world so much as going into a shop to buy anything. I cannot tell how *wae* his little gift made me, as well as glad ; it was the first thing of the kind he ever gave to me in his life. In great matters he is always kind and considerate, but these little attentions, which we women attach so much importance to, he was never in the habit of rendering to anyone ; his up-bringing, and the severe turn of mind he had from nature, had alike indisposed him towards them. And now the desire to replace to me the irreplaceable " (her mother) " makes him as good in little things as he used to be in great."

In August 1842 Carlyle was taken by Stephen Spring-Rice, Commissioner of Customs, in an Admiralty Yacht of about 250 tons, on a sail to Ostend and back. He visited Bruges and Ghent, and enjoyed the trip, which lasted four

days. Mrs. Carlyle, whose health had been very unsatisfactory ever since the death of her mother, went to Troston Rectory, Suffolk, to stay with the Rev. Reginald Buller. Babbie Welsh remained at Cheyne Row to keep house for Carlyle. Nearly every day he received an affectionate letter from his wife. The first letter, 11th August, 1842, concludes: "God bless you, my dear husband. I hope you are rested, and going to Lady Harriet; and I hope you will think of me a great deal, and be as good to me when I return as you were when I came away—I do not desire any more of you. Your own—J. C."

Mrs. Carlyle was one of those people to whom the unhappy confide their sorrows. So many came to her that she described her house as a "general audit office for all the miseries of the universe. Why does every miserable man and woman of my acquaintance come to me with his and her woes, as if I had no woes of my own, nothing in the world to do but to console others? '*Ach Gott*' my head is getting to be a perfect chaos of other people's disasters and despairs."

And yet Browning thought Mrs. Carlyle "a hard and unloveable woman." Froude said of the Carlyles, "his was the soft heart, and hers the stern one." A lady, one of the few people left who can remember both the Carlyles, informs me that Mrs. Carlyle "frightened" her. Carlyle used to chide his wife for "that Edinburgh style of mockery"; he begged her to soften her heart. In one of her letters she complained that she was considered "formidable" and "sarcastic"; in another she said that with the advancing years she had acquired "the look of a very cold and hard woman." The explanation may be found in the excessive egotism of which Mrs. Carlyle, like her husband, was a victim. She was kind to servants, to a German governess, to a simple-minded young cousin, to foreign refugees, to half-mad people; these were her easiest conquests. There were, indeed, many others—men and women of note—but, with her as with Carlyle, it was essential that there should be no slightest touch or hint of rivalry. Those who desired her regard had to come as

suppliants. If there was no love lost between her and Browning the reason may have been that Browning's egotism clashed with hers.

Of the foreigners who came to see Mrs. Carlyle—besides Cavaignac, Mazzini, and others mentioned in a former chapter—there were Gambardella, who painted portraits of Carlyle and his wife, and of some of the Welshes; Petrucci, a follower of Mazzini; Fräulein Bölte, a governess; Count Krasinski, a Pole. Of a more famous Pole Mrs. Carlyle wrote to Babbie Welsh: "Chopin has been *here*!! I never heard the piano played before—could not have believed the capabilities that be in it."

Cavaignac was much liked by Carlyle, while between him and Mrs. Carlyle there was real affection and regard. In a letter to her husband Cavaignac described her as "*bonne et noble âme s'il en fut . . . par le ciel, il n'y a pas sur cette terre trois femmes comme celle-là!*[1] Cavaignac one day, wrote Mrs. Carlyle to her husband, "was found sitting when I came home from my drive, and said, with all the cold-bloodedness imaginable, '*Voulez-vous me donner à dîner, madame?*'—an astonishing question to a woman whose whole earthly prospects in the way of dinner were bounded there and then to one fried sole and two *pommes de terre*! And when this sumptuous repast was placed on the table, with the addition of a spoonful of improvised hash, he sat down to it exclaiming *à plusieurs reprises*: '*Mon Dieu, comme j'ai faim, moi!*'"

Mazzini also came frequently to Cheyne Row. When his correspondence was opened by the order of the Postmaster-General, Carlyle wrote to *The Times* a letter of protest. But he had no sympathy for Mazzini's aspirations, and rather disapproved of his house becoming a home for political exiles.

Mazzini's English was fluent, but he used some quaint expressions, which are quoted frequently in Mrs. Carlyle's letters. "Strange, upon my honour," "Thanks God," and "What shall I say?" she used often. Mazzini's

[1] *Letters of J. W. Carlyle*, edited by Dr. L. Huxley, p. 130.

"Here down" meant here below; a mad person was "a mad," a poor person was "a poor." "There came to pass a sweep," was Mazzini's way of saying that a sweep appeared. "Lapidated" occurred in a conversation with Erasmus Darwin. Mrs. Carlyle writes to Babbie: "Darwin and Mazzini met here the other day and the three of us sat with our feet on the fender—the folding door being closed—and talked about 'things in general,' forming the most confidential little fireside party I have seen for a good while. Mazzini said that Sismondi had at one time been 'nearly lapidated.' 'Nonsense,' said I, 'you should say stoned, there is no such word as lapidated in that sense.' 'Let him alone,' said Darwin, 'he is quite right, *lapidated* is an excellent word.' 'Do not mind him,' said I to M., 'he only wants to lead you into making a mistake.' 'But are you sure?' asked M. with the greatest simplicity—'in the Bible, for instance, does not *She call it lapidated* in speaking of St. Stephen?' This femalising of the Bible so delighted Darwin that he gave a sovereign to the school!"[1] The reference is to Mazzini's school for poor Italian boys.

Gambardella, called usually "Spiridione," his Christian name, is often mentioned in Mrs. Carlyle's correspondence. There were difficulties about the portrait he painted of Carlyle, and of Mrs. Carlyle. There was his flirtation with Miss Jewsbury, and other entertaining incidents. On one occasion he treadled, with Carlyle, a velocipede with two seats and four iron wheels, all the way to Wimbledon. "Three hours," wrote Mrs. Carlyle, "that strange pair were toiling along the Highways on a great sprawling velocipede."

Family sayings, which Carlyle called coterie-speech, abound in Mrs. Carlyle's correspondence.

"What does't doe?" was, explained Carlyle, "Anne Cook's question, when 'Lord Jeffrey,' having called, she reported him 'Lurcherfield' (to general amazement!), and getting rebuked: 'But what *is* a "Looard" then? What diz't *duih*?'"

[1] *Letters of J. W. Carlyle*, edited by Dr. L. Huxley, p. 89.

" With the best intentions, always unfortunate," was one of John's sayings.

" Appeals to posterity," was derived from Cavaignac's story of the drunken man, whom boys were annoying, who said, " *Vous êtes des injustes, je m'en appelle à la posterité !* "

" Trouble that hae the worl' " came from a story told by Carlyle's mother of a poor Annandale woman who became possessed of an actual £1 note, and could find no place safe enough to hide it in. " They have trouble that hae the worl' ! " she exclaimed in annoyance, " and trouble that hae na't."

One of Mrs. Carlyle's letters to Sterling began, " My dear John ' after all.' " Carlyle's note is, " Poor fellow, after all ! was very often the finish of my brother John in summing up his censures of men—so often that we had grown to expect it and banter it."

" He is but a man " ; " I was but a woman," are explained by Carlyle's note. " The Corporate Weavers at Dumfries elected a deacon, or chief of weavers, who was excessively flattered by the honour. In the course of the installation dinner, at some high point of the hep-hep-hurrahing, he exclaimed, with sweet pain, ' Oh, Gentlemen, remember I am but a man.' "

" Was there ever anything in the least like it ? " was a common phrase of Mrs. Welsh's, often repeated by her daughter.

" A good joy," said one of Leigh Hunt's children, on the sight of flowers.

" Mamma, wine makes cosy," said a little girl who had been given a glass, for her cold.

" Coot and coom again," is explained by Carlyle : " ' The Grace of God, brethren,' said some (mythical) Methodist, ' is like a round of beef ; there is coot and,' etc."

The sayings of Carlyle's father were remembered. " Unintelligible whinner," was James Carlyle's account of a precentor who lost his tune, desperately tried several others, and then " died away into an," etc. " I, as one

solitary individual"; and "like a fly among tar"; "crackbrained enthusiast"; "I don't believe thee"; came also from Carlyle's father.

"Ah, papa, all these soldiers were once men," was the speech of a very young Wedgwood at a Woolwich review.

"He can beat us all for a deep thought," was said by a foolish mother of her stupid lout of a son.

"Very particularly damn him," is explained by Carlyle in a note. "Old MacTurk, on paying his reapers at evening (who had taken to 'kemp,' and spoiled much stuff), said to each, with the 2*s.* 6*d.*, 'God damn you!' and to one old woman (originator of the thing), 'And God particularly damn you, ye ——!'"

"How expensive," said the servant Helen, on being taken to the National Gallery.

"The honour of the thing," occurs often, in allusion to the Irishman riding in a sedan of which the floor gave way, letting his feet on to the ground. "If it were not for the honour of the thing," said he, "one might as well walk."

"Goody," was Carlyle's pet name for his wife, to which she responded with "Good" or "Ill," just as to his "Dear" she would reply "Cheap."

It was now Mrs. Carlyle's turn to make the acquaintance of Lady Harriet Baring, four years after Carlyle had done so. The letter to her cousin of 28th May, 1843, in which she records the event is the only one of hers which she marked "private." She said that Miss Jewsbury was scandalised at the "liaison" between Carlyle and Lady Harriet, but that she herself was inaccessible to jealousy, and pleased rather that her husband had found a house to which he liked to go regularly, one evening in the week at least. "Mrs. Buller in her graceful quizzical way insisted I should see a little into the thing with my own eyes, and promised to give me notice the first time she knew beforehand of the Intellectual Circe's coming to her house—and accordingly Mrs. Buller came last Monday to ask me to meet her that evening at tea at seven o'clock."

Mrs. Carlyle went, and she reported to Babbie that she liked Lady Harriet on the whole. She added, "In the

last note to Carlyle inviting him to Addiscombe " (the country house of the Barings) " for next Sunday she says—' I meditate paying my respects to Mrs. Carlyle—so soon as I am again making visits—she is a *reality* whom you have hitherto quite suppressed.' "[1]

It was not by Carlyle, nor at his suggestion, that his wife was introduced to the lady whom he was in the habit of visiting once a week. Not long afterwards Mrs. Carlyle began to talk about leaving her husband "for good and all."[2]

The house requiring repairs, Carlyle went for a holiday of eleven weeks in Wales and Scotland ; he returned to the renovated home on the 19th September, 1843. He had passed one of his days on the battlefield of Dunbar. He set to work in earnest on his Cromwell book. But there were noises, a piano next door, a cock in a neighbouring garden. He could not decide upon the form that his book should take and was in a very unpleasant humour. He was dissatisfied with the changes his wife had worked hard to get done, and made her undertake further alterations.

In June 1844 Mrs. Carlyle went to her uncle's at Liverpool, and thence to the Paulets. Carlyle, during her absence, saw much of the Barings, either at Addiscombe Farm, near Croydon, or at Bath House, in London. In September he went, without his wife, to the Grange, Hampshire, the country house of Lord and Lady Ashburton, where he met Lady Harriet again. The sirens were singing to him.

[1] *Letters of J. W. Carlyle*, edited by Dr. L. Huxley, pp. 127, 129.

[2] *Letters and Memorials*, I., 287.

CHAPTER XIX

"PAST AND PRESENT"

IN the early months of the year 1843 Carlyle turned aside from his work on Cromwell to give expression to thoughts that were burning within him, on "The-Condition-of-England Question." He wrote at great speed, as he was full of his subject. The book was soon finished. He gave it the title of *Past and Present.* He was ever conscious of the unity of all history, of the past being still here in the present. To emphasise the meaning of the title, he introduced into the book a description of the monastic life of the twelfth century, as exhibited in a Chronicle written by a monk of St. Edmundsbury, one Jocelin of Brakelond. The Camden Society had published the Latin text, in 1840, under the editorship of J. G. Rokewood, F.R.S. Jocelin was Chaplain to Samson, the Abbot elected in 1182. His Chronicle is a biography of Samson.

The story told by Jocelin was that, when Samson was elected, the Abbey was heavily in debt and the monks were out of hand, owing to the incompetence of his predecessor, Abbot Hugh. Samson paid off the debt and increased the resources of the Abbey; and he enforced discipline and order among the monks. He raised the consideration in which the Abbot was held both within and without the walls of the Abbey. He was a hero after Carlyle's heart.

The election of Samson seemed to Carlyle to prove that in the twelfth century men were capable of distinguishing Worth from Unworth. He forgot that at the previous election they had chosen the incompetent Abbot Hugh. But though the argument is not convincing, Carlyle

succeeds in bringing the monks vividly before us; we see them moving and talking; they are real.

The first and third part of *Past and Present* are a repetition, with variation, of the theme already presented in *Chartism.*

Accuracy was not one of Carlyle's attributes. On the first page we are told that England contained "fifteen millions of workers, understood to be the strongest, the cunningest and the willingest our Earth ever had." That was, of course, the total population, of all ages, of men, women, and children.

"Of these successful skilful workers some two millions it is now counted, sit in Workhouses, Poor-Law Prisons; or have 'out-door relief' flung over the wall to them,—the workhouse Bastille being filled to bursting, and the strong Poor-Law broken asunder by a stronger. They sit there these many months now; their hope of deliverance as yet small. In workhouses, pleasantly so named, because work cannot be done in them. Twelve hundred thousand workers in England alone; their cunning right-hand lamed, lying idle in their sorrowful bosom; their hopes, outlooks, share of this fair world, shut in by narrow walls." Carlyle obtained the figure of 1,200,000 from the official return of paupers in England and Wales, at Lady Day 1842: indoor 221,687; outdoor, 1,207,402; total, 1,429,089.[1] The total of paupers of all ages and sexes was 1,429,000—which he converts into two million skilled workers; the number of men, women, and children in workhouses in England and Wales was 221,000, which he quietly enlarges into 1,200,000 skilled workmen in England.

In his account of the "Manchester Insurrection" Carlyle says, "A million hungry operative men started up, in utmost paroxysm of desperate protest against their lot. . . . Certain hundreds of drilled soldiers sufficed to suppress this million-headed hydra." There were about 60,000 persons present, men, women, and children. If a million operative men went to Manchester, how could the work of the country be done?

[1] *Past and Present*, edited by A. M. D. Hughes, p. 2 *n.*

" ' Behold us here, so many thousands, millions, and increasing at the rate of fifty every hour.' " Carlyle had evidently the Registrar-General's return for 1841 before him, where the births are given as fifty-five per hour. It was characteristic of him to ignore the deaths given in the same return. The real increase was about a third of what he said.

" If our Trade in twenty years, ' flourishing ' as never Trade flourished, could double itself : yet then also, by the Old Laissez-faire method, our Population is doubled ; we shall be as we are, only twice as many of us, twice and ten times as unmanageable." The population of Great Britain increased at a great pace, 14 per cent. between 1831 and 1841. At that rate it would increase a little more than a quarter, not double itself, in twenty years.

Inaccurate and careless as he always was when dealing with concrete matters, with all his exaggeration and extravagance, Carlyle in this book touches the heart, arouses the conscience, and compels reflection.

Never, in all history, he declared, was the condition of the poor so desperate. " The working body of this rich English Nation has sunk or is fast sinking into a state, to which, all sides of it considered, there was literally never any parallel. . . . It is too clear the Nation itself is on the way to suicidal death. . . . We are rushing swiftly on the road to destruction." And yet at the end of the book he said that improvement had already begun.

" ' A fair day's wages for a fair day's work ' : it is as just a demand as Governed man ever made of Governing. It is the everlasting right of man. . . . Never till now, in the history of an Earth which to this hour nowhere refuses to grow corn if you will plough it, to yield shirts if you will spin and weave in it, did the mere manual two-handed worker (however it might fare with other workers) cry in vain for such ' wages ' as *he* means by ' fair wages,' namely food and warmth ! The Godlike could not and cannot be paid ; but the Earthly always could. Gurth, a mere swineherd, born thrall of Cedric the Saxon, tended pigs in the wood, and did get some parings of the pork. Why,

the four-footed worker has already *got* all that this two-handed one is clamouring for! How often must I remind you? There is not a horse in England, able and willing to work, but *has* due food and lodging; and goes about sleek-coated, satisfied in heart."

But there are many horses which do not have due food and lodging, and are not sleek-coated; and unless there is work for a horse he is not allowed to live; the horse population is kept down to the number of horses that can be employed. Carlyle would not have agreed with the modern view, held in some quarters, that the human population should be restricted, as is done with horses. And yet with this totally unapt horse analogy he succeeds in making an effective appeal. He points to a well-fed horse and a starved man, and declares that such a comparison should not be possible.

When an individual is miserable he should "penitently say to himself first of all, Behold I was not wise enough; I quitted the laws of Fact, which are also called the Laws of God, and mistook for them the Laws of Sham and Semblance, which are called the Devil's Laws; therefore am I here!" Nations, he says, are like individuals. "When a Nation is unhappy, the old Prophet was right and not wrong in saying to it: Ye have forgotten God, ye have quitted the ways of God, or ye would not have been unhappy. It is not according to the laws of Fact that ye have lived and guided yourselves, but according to the laws of Delusion, Imposture, and wilful and unwilful *Mistake* of Fact; behold therefore the Unveracity is worn out; Nature's long-suffering with you is exhausted; and ye are here.

"Rhetoric all this? No, my brother, very singular to say, it is Fact all this. Cocker's Arithmetic is not truer. Forgotten in these days, it is old as the foundations of the Universe, and will endure till the Universe cease. It is forgotten now, and the first mention of it puckers thy sweet countenance into a sneer."

A long, threatening finger is pointed directly at the brother. "Reader, even Christian Reader, as thy title

goes, hast thou any notion of Heaven and Hell? I rather apprehend, not." They are not a fable nor semi-fable, they are an everlasting highest fact. The old idea of a lake of burning sulphur " has vanished, or has not vanished ; believe as thou wilt as to all this. But that an Infinite of Practical Importance, speaking with strict arithmetical exactness, an *Infinite*, has vanished or can vanish from the Life of any Man : this thou shalt not believe ! O brother, the Infinite of Terror, of Hope, of Pity, did it not at any time disclose itself to thee, indubitable, unnameable ? Came it never, like the gleam of preter-natural eternal Oceans, like the voice of old Eternities, far-sounding through thy heart of hearts ? Never ? Alas, it was not thy Liberalism then : it was thy Animalism ! "

" Thou there," shouts the schoolmaster, " the thing for thee to do is, if possible, to cease to be a hollow sounding shell of hearsays, egoisms, purblind dilettantisms ; and become, were it on the infinitely small scale, a faithful deserving soul."

Then comes the unforgettable story of the Irishwoman. " A poor Irish Widow, her husband having died in one of the Lanes of Edinburgh, went forth with her three children, bare of all resource, to solicit help from the Charitable Establishments of that City. At this Charitable Establishment and then at that she was refused ; referred from one to the other, helped by none ;—till she had exhausted them all ; till her strength and heart failed her : she sank down in typhus-fever ; died, and infected her Lane with fever, so that seventeen other persons died of fever there in consequence. The humane Physician asks therefore, as with a heart too full for speaking, Would it not have been *economy* to help this poor Widow ? She took typhus-fever, and killed seventeen of you !—Very curious. The forlorn Irish Widow applies to her fellow creatures, as if saying, ' Behold I am sinking, bare of help ; Ye must help me ! I am your sister, bone of your bone ; one God made us : ye must help me ! ' They answer, ' No, impossible ; thou art no sister of ours.' But she proves her sisterhood ;

her typhus-fever kills *them*: they actually were her brothers, though denying it! Had human creature ever to go lower for a proof?"

Passages such as this have earned for Carlyle the character of a champion of Labour. He described, with tenderness and eloquence, the individual drama. Such tragedies should not be possible. They are due to the system of *laissez-faire*. "Gurth's brass collar did not gall him: Cedric *deserved* to be his master. Gurth had the inexpressible satisfaction of feeling himself related indissolubly, though in a rude brass-collar way, to his fellow mortals in this Earth.

"We call it a Society; and go about professing openly the totallest separation, isolation. Our life is not a mutual helpfulness; but rather, cloaked under due laws-of-war, named 'fair competition' and so forth it is a mutual hostility. We have profoundly forgotten everywhere that *Cash-payment* is not the sole relation of human beings; we think, nothing doubting that *it* absolves and liquidates all engagements of man. 'My starving workers!' answers the rich Millowner: 'Did I not hire them fairly in the market? Did I not pay them, to the last sixpence, the sum covenanted for? What have I to do with them more?' Verily Mammon-worship is a melancholy creed."

The only hope lay in the discovery of a Hero. "Unless some Hero-worship, in its new appropriate form, can return, this World does not promise to be very habitable long." To be able to recognise the Hero it is necessary to "acquire the true eye for talent," which "presupposes the true reverence for it."

The Hero may reveal himself through the ordeal of battle. "In all battles, if you await the issue, each fight has prospered according to his right. His right and his might, at the close of the account, were one and the same. . . . All fighting, as we noticed long ago, is the dusty conflict of strengths, each thinking itself the strongest, or, in other words, the justest; of Mights which do in the long run, and for ever will in this just Universe in the long

run, mean Rights. . . . The fighting too was indispensable, for ascertaining who had the might over whom, the right over whom."

If a Hero cannot be found there is always at hand the weapon of force. " Who can despair of Governments that passes a Soldier's Guardhouse, or meets a redcoated man on the streets ! . . . here still is a reality . . . he of the red coat, I say, is a success and no failure ! He will veritably, if he get orders, draw out a long sword and kill me. No mistake there. He is a fact and not a shadow. . . . Let no man despair of Governments who looks on those two sentries at the Horse-Guards, and our United-Service Clubs ! "

Interference between the workers and the master-workers had begun ; there were already factory inspectors. Carlyle desired that the principle should be extended. He pleaded also for clean and airy factories, for baths and for open spaces. He repeated the demand he had made in *Chartism* for " a right Education Bill," and for an " Emigration Service " ; he suggested the employment of " Idle Navy Ships " for the transport of emigrants.

But " though Government can do much, it can in no wise do all. . . . The main substance of this immense problem of Organising Labour, and first of all of Managing the Working Classes, will, it is very clear, have to be solved by those who stand practically in the middle of it ; by those who themselves work and preside over work."

Then follows an appeal to the master-workers, the Captains of Industry, who are " virtually the Captains of the World ; if there be no nobleness in them, there will never be an Aristocracy more. . . . To be a noble Master, among noble Workers, will again be the first ambition among some few ; to be a rich Master only the second.

" Your gallant battle-hosts and work-hosts, as the others did, will need to be made loyally yours ; they must and will be regulated, methodically secured in their just share of conquest under you ;—joined with you in veritable brotherhood, sonhood, quite other and deeper ties than those of

temporary day's wages! How would mere redcoated regiments, to say nothing of chivalries, fight for you, if you could discharge them on the evening of the battle, on payment of the stipulated shillings,—and they discharge you on the morning of it."

The suggestion is that employment should be permanent, the employer being bound to pay the workman even when there is no work for him, and the workman bound to work whenever work is offered him. Carlyle supposed that both parties would adhere to their bargain. The employer would pay, whether there was work to be done or not. The man would give the promised work whenever it was demanded, for the agreed sum. In case of remissness on either side Carlyle assumed that force would be applied. But if an employer has no money how can he be made to pay? The difficulty of enforcing labour should have been familiar to a schoolmaster.

Some parts of this book have been misinterpreted. Carlyle has been regarded as a supporter of the doctrine that the land belongs to the people. He said, "The Land belongs to these two: to the Almighty God; and to all His Children of Men that have ever worked well on it, or that shall ever work well on it." By "worked well" Carlyle means managed well, governed well.

"Again and again we have to say, there can be no true Aristocracy but must possess the land. . . . Whoever possesses the land, he, more emphatically than any other, is the Governor, Vice-King of the people on the Land." William the Conqueror, who was an infallible judge of worth, gave the land to the "Wisest, Strongest, everyway Best . . . seated each on his piece of territory, which was lent him, then gradually given him, that he might govern it. These Vice-Kings, each on his portion of the common soil of England, with a Head King over all, were a 'Virtuality perfected into an Actuality' really to an astonishing extent. For those were rugged stalwart ages; full of earnestness, of a rude God's truth.

"That Feudal Aristocracy, I say, was no imaginary one. To a respectable degree, its *Jarls*, what we now call Earls,

were *Strong-ones* in fact as well as etymology ; its Dukes *Leaders* ; its Lords *Law-wards*. They did all the Soldiering and Police of the country, all the Judging, Law-making, even the Church Extension ; whatsoever in the way of Governing, of Guiding and Protecting could be done. It was a Land Aristocracy ; it managed the Governing of this English People, and had the reaping of the Soil of England in return. It is, in many senses, the Law of Nature, this same Law of Feudalism ;—no right Aristocracy but a Land one ! "

The land belongs to the Aristocrats, who are the only people capable of governing. " If we made the Holders of the Land pay every shilling still of the expense of Governing the Land, what were all that ? The Land, by mere hired Governors, cannot be got governed. You cannot hire men to govern the Land : it is by a mission not contracted for in the Stock-Exchange, but felt in their own hearts as coming out of Heaven, that men can Govern a Land. The mission of a Land Aristocracy is a *sacred* one, in both the senses of that old word."

Carlyle's views on Labour have also been misunderstood. In his insistence upon honest work, his assertion that " Labour is Life," he was more in accord with the feeling of his day than with our pleasure-loving epoch. " We construct our theory of Human Duties, not on any Greatest-Nobleness Principle, never so mistaken ; no, but on a Greatest-Happiness Principle. The word *Soul* with us, as in some Slavonic dialects, seems to be synonymous with *Stomach*. . . . ' Happy, my brother ? ' The only happiness a brave man ever troubled himself with asking much about was, happiness enough to get his work done. Not ' I can't eat ' but ' I can't work,' that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man, that he cannot work ; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled.

" For there is a perennial nobleness, and even Sacredness in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works : in idleness alone is there perpetual

despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, *is* in communication with Nature ; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth . . . a man perfects himself by working. Foul jungles are cleared away, fair seedfields rise instead, and stately cities ; and withal the man himself first ceases to be a jungle and foul unwholesome desert thereby. Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work ! Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like helldogs lie beleaguering the soul of the poor dayworker, as of every man : but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves. The man is now a man. The blessed glow of Labour in him, is it not as purifying fire, wherein all passion is burnt up, and of sour smoke itself there is made bright blessed flame !

" The unredeemed ugliness is that of a slothful People. Show me a People energetically busy ; heaving, struggling, all shoulders at the wheel ; their heart pulsing, every muscle swelling, with man's energy and will ;—I will show you a People of whom Great Good is already predicable.

The nation which does not put its heart into its work is doomed to languish and decay ; it will be conquered, dominated, by the nation which heaves and struggles. Carlyle's plea that work is itself noble, that it is worship, that *laborare est orare*, rests upon the basic Law of Nature, that movement is life and stagnation is death. All human progress, all excellence of every kind, has been, is, and will be due to work, to action, without which there is no life.

Already, in *Chartism*, Carlyle had spoken against the Chartist proposal of Government by the people, by means of universal suffrage—much to the annoyance of the Chartists. They did not make the mistake of regarding Carlyle as one of their champions. That error was reserved for the Labour Party of later date which read into *Past and Present* an exposition of their own gospel.

Here is a typical passage which has been misinterpreted : " Giant Labour, truest emblem there is of God the World-Worker, Demiurgus, and Eternal Maker ; noble *Labour*, which is yet to be the King of this Earth, and sit on the highest throne. . . . Labour must become a seeing rational giant, with a *soul* in the body of him, and take his place on the throne of things—leaving his Mammonism, and several other adjuncts, on the lower steps of said throne."

The misunderstanding consists in interpreting " Labour " to mean trade-unionism, with strikes and ca' canny, whereas Carlyle used the word to signify " Work." Honest work is to be on the throne. It must be work without Mammonism, that is, it must be inspired by the conscientious, self-respecting, determination to give more than the minimum demanded. That is what Carlyle means by his " Chivalry of Labour," the phrase being interchangeable with " Chivalry of Work." " No working World, any more than a Fighting World, can be led on without a noble Chivalry of Work, and laws and fixed rules which follow out of that,—far nobler than any Chivalry of Fighting was."

The whole meaning of *Past and Present* is that the cash-nexus should not be considered as the only bond between master and man, by either party. The master should not be satisfied with providing good conditions for work and production, he should remember also that workmen have souls. The man should give the utmost quantity, and best quality, of work that he is capable of producing, without regard to the money wage he is to receive.

What Carlyle desired, and expected, was " that there will again *be* a King in Israel ; a system of Order and Government ; and every man shall, in some measure, see himself constrained to do that which is right in the King's eyes. . . . An actual new Sovereignty, Industrial Aristocracy, real not imaginary Aristocracy, is indispensable and indubitable for us."

The King must use compulsion. " O, if thou really art my *Senior*, Seigneur, my *Elder*, Presbyter or Priest,—if thou art in very deed my Wiser, may a beneficent instinct

lead and impel thee to 'conquer' me, to command me! If thou do know better than I what is good and right, I conjure thee in the name of God, force me to do it; were it by never such brass collars, whips and handcuffs, leave me not to walk over precipices!"

You cannot "any more continue to lead a Working World unregimented, anarchic. . . . To reconcile Despotism with Freedom:—well, is that such a mystery? Do you not already know the way? It is to make your Despotism *just*. Rigorous as Destiny: but just too, as Destiny and its Laws."

That employers should consider the welfare, both physical and moral, of their work-people, was no new gospel. Interference by Parliament, between employer and employed, had already begun when Carlyle raised his voice; and extensions of the principle were being advocated by many persons besides himself. Twenty-seven years were yet to pass before education was taken in hand. The doctrine of *laissez-faire* survived Carlyle's attacks for many a day. The reaction has now gone much further than he would have approved.

Though, like his *Chartism*, Carlyle's book came after *Oliver Twist*, it preceded *Sybil*, *Mary Barton*, *Alton Locke*, "The Song of the Shirt," and many similar works. Dickens, and Hood, and the practical work of Shaftesbury, had probably as much influence as Carlyle.

When he propounded views which were peculiarly his own, he was ignored. We have not established permanent employment, which would make the workman a slave; nor have we installed government by a Despot chosen from the landed aristocracy; and the modern regimentation of labour by Captains of Trade Unions, to limit work and dictate to the employer, is precisely the opposite of what Carlyle advocated.

CHAPTER XX

"THE LETTERS AND SPEECHES OF OLIVER CROMWELL"

1. *The Pious Editor*

THE Puritan Revolution attracted Carlyle when he was still a young man. In the year 1822 he had already thought of writing on the Civil War and the Commonwealth; he proposed to exhibit the national character by portraits of Cromwell and others of the chief actors. Thus early had he shown his preference for persons over events.

His view of Cromwell was at that time in accord with the opinion then prevalent. He described Cromwell, in a notebook of the year 1826, as, "The wily fanatic, at once hero and a blackguard pettifogging scrub."[1] But when, some years later, he read one of Cromwell's speeches, he was immediately convinced that the "confusion, ineptitude and dishonesty" that he had hitherto seen in the portraits of Lely and Cooper were, in fact, not there at all. Cromwell exhibited in his person whatever character Carlyle at the time was bent upon discovering.

He began to study the subject in earnest early in 1839. At Mill's suggestion he prepared to write an article for the *London and Westminster Review*, but before it was finished Mill went abroad for his health, and the sub-editor, Robertson, took the opportunity to write on Cromwell himself. The essay, which was favourable to Cromwell, was published in October 1839.

Then, in May 1840, in the last of the lectures on "Heroes," Carlyle propounded the view that Cromwell had been misjudged, that he had been deeply and sincerely

[1] *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, edited by C. E. Norton.

religious, and free from unworthy personal aims—not, as had hitherto been supposed, an ambitious hypocrite.

The lectures being finished, not to be embarked upon again, Carlyle had leisure for a book. At first he thought of writing a history of the Cromwellian period, but he always preferred biography to history. He returned to the project of 1822. He printed Cromwell's letters and speeches, and added comments by way of portraiture. The book was published in two volumes in December 1845. Its success was immediate, much to Carlyle's astonishment. A second edition, with many new letters, was issued in May 1846, in three volumes.

In the first chapter, headed " Anti-Dryasdust," Carlyle indulged in a long and violent denunciation of the authorities who had supplied him with much of his material. " Few nobler Heroisms," he says, " at bottom perhaps no nobler Heroism ever transacted itself on this Earth ; and it lies as good as lost to us : overwhelmed under such an avalanche of Human Stupidities as no Heroism ever before did. . . . The documents and records of it, scattered waste as a shoreless chaos, are not legible. They lie there, printed, written, to the extent of tons and squares of miles, as shot-rubbish ; unedited, unsorted, not so much as indexed. . . . There are from Thirty to Fifty Thousand unread Pamphlets of the Civil War in the British Museum alone[1] : huge piles of mouldering wreck, wherein, at the rate of perhaps one pennyweight per ton, lie things memorable. They lie preserved there, waiting happier days ; under present conditions they cannot, except for idle purposes, for dilettante excerpts and such like, be got examined. The Rushworths, Whitelockes, Nalsons, Thurloes ; enormous folios, these and many others have been printed, and some of them again printed, but never yet edited,—edited as you edit wagonloads of broken bricks and dry mortar, simply by tumbling up the wagon ! Not one of those monstrous old volumes has so much as an available Index.

" The Rushworthian Elysium. Dreariest continent of

[1] These are the King's Pamphlets.

shot-rubbish the eye ever saw. Confusion piled on confusion to your utmost horizon's edge : obscure, in lurid twilight as of the shadow of Death ; trackless, without index, without finger-post, or mark of any human foregoer ;—where your human footstep, if you are still human, echoes bodeful through the gaunt solitude, peopled only by somnabulant Pedants, Dillettants, and doleful creatures, by Phantasms, errors, inconceivabilities, by Nightmares, pasteboard Norroys, griffins, wiverns, and chimeras dire ! There, all vanquished, overwhelmed under such waste lumber-mountains, the wreck and dead ashes of some six unbelieving generations, does the Age of Cromwell and his Puritans lie hidden from us. . . . O Dryasdust, my voluminous friend, had Human Stupidity continued in the diligent state, think you it had ever come to this ? Surely at least you might have made an Index for these huge books ! Even your genius, had you been faithful, was adequate to that. Those thirty or fifty thousand old Newspapers and Pamphlets of the King's Library, it is you, my voluminous friend, that should have sifted them long ago."

Then he spoke of his own arduous labours. " These authentic utterances of the man Oliver himself—I have gathered them from far and near ! fished them up from the foul Lethean quagmires where they lay buried." He had been " working for long years in those unspeakable Historic Provinces."

" The Speeches above all, as hitherto set forth in the *Somers Tracts*, in the *Milton State-Papers*, in *Burton's Diary*, and other such books, excel human belief : certainly no such agglomeration of opaque confusions, printed and reprinted ; of darkness on the back of darkness, thick and three-fold ; is known to me elsewhere in the history of things spoken or printed by human creatures. Of these Speeches, all except one, which was published by authority at the time, I have to believe myself, not exultingly, to be the first actual reader for nearly two Centuries past."

The complaints are extravagant and the statements erroneous. Carlyle's claim to be the first actual reader of

Cromwell's speeches is ridiculous, unless, indeed, there is some magic in the word "actual." He may have supposed he was the first to read the speeches with understanding. But that interpretation does not lessen the offensive arrogance of the passage.

The King's Pamphlets, or Thomason Tracts, consist of some 22,800 separate pieces collected between the years 1640 and 1661; they were arranged in five parts, in chronological order, in 2,220 volumes, with a manuscript catalogue of twelve volumes. In 1908 a printed catalogue and index, in two volumes, was issued, under the editorship of G. F. Fortescue. This great collection was bought by George III in 1761 and presented by him to the British Museum in 1762.[1]

In February 1849 Carlyle, giving evidence before the Royal Commission on the British Museum, said of the Thomason Tracts, "They are called the King's Pamphlets, and in value I believe the whole world could not parallel them. I consider them to be the most valuable set of documents connected with English history. . . . I succeeded in getting great benefit from them. . . . There is already a manuscript Catalogue of them, or they would be of no use. . . . The catalogue is very well drawn up. . . . I drew up a memorial to the Trustees, recommending that the catalogue should be printed, and copies for sale."[2]

In confidential discussion with the distinguished men who asked his opinion, Carlyle said that the King's Pamphlets were most valuable, that he derived much benefit from them, that there was a good catalogue. In his book he said that they had no index, and were therefore quite useless. This is an instructive example of the difference between Carlyle's manner to the public and to a recognised authority; he despised and flouted the former, and was careless what he said to it, while his attitude towards the latter was respectful, confidential, and marked by an evident desire to appear in a favourable light.

[1] F. Madan, *Bibliographica*, Vol. III., October 1896; G. F. Fortescue, *Catalogue of Thomason Tracts*, 1908, 2 vols.

[2] Report of the Commissioners, 1850, p. 271, *et seq.*

The assertion, made three times, that the Rushworth, Whitelocke, Nalson, and Thurloe collections have no indexes, is surprising. For all these works have indexes. Each of the seven Thurloe volumes has an excellent index; conspicuous on the title-page are the words, "With a complete index to each volume." The Whitelocke volume also has the statement on the title-page, "With a complete index." Each of the seven Rushworth volumes has an index of a dozen pages or more. The copy of Rushworth now in the London Library was used by Carlyle; it has his pencil marks in the margin. The two Nalson volumes also have an index. Carlyle quoted these works frequently. From Thurloe he took thirty letters of Cromwell, from Rushworth nine, from the King's Pamphlets fifteen.

When Carlyle informed the world that the age of Cromwell lay hidden from us, overwhelmed under waste lumber mountains of shot-rubbish, because such rubbish was "unsorted, not so much as indexed," and proceeded to particularise the King's Pamphlets, the Rushworth, Whitelocke, Nalson, and Thurloe volumes, asserting that they were useless because they had no indexes, he was guilty of a carelessness so gross that it amounts to something very like dishonesty.[1]

Speaking of the letters, Carlyle says: "Here and there, to bring out the struggling sense, I have added or rectified a word—but taken care to point out the same; what words in the Text of the letters are mine, the reader will find marked off by single commas: it was of course my supreme duty to avoid altering, in any respect, not only the sense, but the smallest feature in the physiognomy of the Original." He was taking credit without justification. Mrs. Lomas remarks[2]: "Taking Carlyle's edition

[1] A distinguished man of letters, commenting on Carlyle's conduct in this matter, expressed his indignation as follows: "If you are not an ignorant impostor, you are a wilful ——" (Palgrave, *National Review*, January 1887).

[2] *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, by Thomas Carlyle, Edited by S. C. Lomas, with an introduction by C. H. Firth. Editor's Note, p. lv. An example of care and accuracy in editing of which Carlyle had no conception, and without any boastings or complainings of the labour involved.

as a whole, the mistakes in the letters are very numerous, but not, as a rule, important. Sometimes, however, they affect the sense, and in such cases Carlyle unhesitatingly inserted words of his own, without reflecting that, as Cromwell was a very accurate writer, he would not be likely to send out letters which needed such 'embellishments' to explain them.

"See, for instance, Letter xciii., written to Mrs. Mayor on the subject of Richard Cromwell's marriage, and entirely in Cromwell's own hand. Into this short letter Carlyle inserted nineteen words, most of them quite unnecessary, and one or two misleading. Moreover, where Cromwell speaks of the contingency of Mayor himself having a *son*, Carlyle (who imagined him to be speaking of Richard) added a note, 'Grandson, i.e.'; in the next sentence, '"die" means more properly "live."' "It is hardly necessary to say," adds Mrs. Lomas, "that, in an important business letter" (about the settlements on the marriage of Richard Cromwell to Miss Mayor), "Cromwell did not say 'son' when he meant 'grandson,' or 'die' when he meant 'live.'"

His old trade of tutor and schoolmaster came out when Carlyle corrected Cromwell's compositions. But what becomes, then, of the pretence of reverence for the exact words of Cromwell, of the supreme duty to avoid altering in any respect the smallest feature in the physiognomy of the original?

"He was rather fond," says Mrs. Lomas, "of doing what he himself, in speaking of one of Cromwell's reporters, calls 'paring down the warts'; improving the composition a little by avoiding repetition of words, or the use of ambiguous pronouns." "But as students must prefer to have Cromwell's letters as Cromwell himself wrote them, they are now given verbatim, Carlyle's 'improvements' being added in the footnotes."[1]

These footnotes, with their revelation of Carlyle's vagaries, occur with astonishing frequency. We find that Carlyle cut out of Cromwell's letters, without indication to

[1] Editor's Note, p. lvi.

the reader, one passage containing sixty-five words, and others of twenty-five, fourteen, and less words.[1] The other alterations, or insertions, made without the stipulated single commas, or any other indication to the reader, are numerous. One example may suffice. Cromwell wrote to Wharton : " You were with us in the Form of things : why not in the Power ? " Without any revelation to the reader, Carlyle altered the meaning. He made Cromwell write : " You were with us in the Power : why not in the Form ? "[2]

Altogether it may be estimated that the changes made by Carlyle in Cromwell's letters, in punctuation, and capitals, in words omitted, inserted, or altered, amount to a good many hundreds.

So irresponsible and wanton an editor of authentic letters naturally runs riot over speeches, which were reported very imperfectly. Carlyle simply gave his own version of what Cromwell said. He knew better than those who heard and reported. The only " authentic utterances of the man Oliver," are put forth by this " Imaginary Editor." He omits and inserts and alters to his heart's content, changing the sense on many occasions.

With regard to his version of the first speech, he says, " Not the slightest change of meaning has, of course, anywhere seemed, or shall anywhere seem, permissible." That claim cannot be allowed. His text is based upon the Milton Papers, with some alterations from the version in the *Old Parliament History*. Both Carlyle's authorities give this sentence : " These are not ill prognostications of that good we wait for." He altered " that good " into " the God," thereby very materially altering Cromwell's meaning. Again, " not vainly to look at that preference in Daniel " is given in both texts. Carlyle struck out " vainly " and inserted " merely," another change in the meaning.[3]

The reference given by Carlyle to Speech II. is, " Old Pamphlet cited above : reprinted in *Parliamentary History*,

[1] I., 160, 197 ; II., 476.
[2] I., 522.
[3] II., 298, 299 ; notes by Mrs. Lomas.

XX. 318, 33." The citation above is the information that the speech was published "By G. Sawbridge, at the *Bible* on Ludgate Hill, London, 1654." The reader obtains the impression that Carlyle's version was taken from the old pamphlet, whereas it was copied from the *Parliamentary History.*

To Speech III. his reference is: "Old Pamphlet, brother to the foregoing, reprinted in *Parliamentary History*, XX. 249, 60." That manner of quoting makes it appear that the text is taken from the pamphlet, but it was copied from the *Parliamentary History.*[1]

One of the alterations Carlyle made in this speech has had an unfortunate result. Cromwell is reported to have said: "When they had finished their model in some measure, or made a very good preparation of it, it became communicative." Carlyle changed the last "it" to "they," "thus," says Mrs. Lomas, "giving a much more modern sense to the word communicative: a sense so uncommon at that date that this supposed instance is noticed in Dr. Murray's *New English Dictionary.*"[2]

With regard to Cromwell's speeches about the Kingship which had been offered him, Carlyle wrote: "It is now our painful duty to deal with this matter also; to extricate Oliver's real words and procedure on it from the detestable confusions and lumber-mountains of Human Stupidity, old and recent, under which, as usual, they lie buried. . . . The words of Oliver, which again are our sole concern, have been left by him" (the writer of a pamphlet reprinted in Somers) "in a very accidental condition! O Sluggardship, Imaginary-Editorship, Flunkeyism, Falsehood, Human Platitude in general——!—But we will complain of nothing. Know well, by experience of him, that Oliver Cromwell always had a meaning, and an honest manful meaning; search well for that, after ten or twenty reperusals you will find it there. Those frightful jungles, trampled down for two centuries now by mere bison and

[1] "So tricky was he," wrote Palgrave, "that on two occasions he makes as though he had printed the speeches from the original manuscripts" (*National Review*, January 1887).

[2] II. 373, note 7; 376, note 5.

hoofed cattle, you will begin to see, *were* once a kind of regularly planted wood ! "

Some of the speeches on the Kingship Carlyle took from the Somers copy of the pamphlet, which, in spite of the alleged two centuries of trampling, is, except for a few misprints, correct. Carlyle was the Sluggard. He believed, like an Imaginary Editor, that the Somers version was incorrect ; in that case he should have gone to the pamphlet in the British Museum, but he shirked the labour and abused others more diligent than himself.[1]

In the first paragraph—twelve lines—of Speech I., Carlyle made twenty-one changes from the print in Burton ; he inserted six capitals, changed nine punctuations, altered five words, and cut out one word.[2] In a later passage in the speech[3] of five lines, there were twenty-one changes, some of them in the words, and one of these makes a difference in the meaning. Calculating from the less mutilated first paragraph, the alterations made by Carlyle in the speeches of Cromwell printed in his book must run into tens of thousands.[4]

Those who provided him with his material were abused in the most shameful way. Even the gentle Mrs. Lomas is obliged to protest. " There is no need," she says, " to defend Birch " (editor of the Thurloe Papers) " from Carlyle's charges of idleness and inefficiency ; his colossal work speaks for itself. But there is one patient and painstaking worker of a bygone day on whose behalf fairness demands a word. Carlyle spares no opportunity of showing his contempt for the work of Mark Noble." Mrs. Lomas shows that the " imbecility " with which

[1] Mrs. Lomas, I., p. lx., says : " But if Carlyle believed this to be the case, why did he not work from the pamphlet itself ? There are two copies of it in the British Museum. As a matter of fact, it is not the case at all."

[2] II , 272.

[3] II., 292. " Truly the judgment " to " which is."

[4] A collection of the speeches has been published, cleared of Carlyle's intrusions—*The Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* (1901). The editor, Stainer, says in his Preface : " It seems high time that some attempt should be made to gather together the actual texts of these speeches, as at present existing, and not to present mere literary versions, in which it is difficult to distinguish between speaker and author."

Carlyle charges "poor Noble" recoils on the head of the accuser. "Dorothy Cromwell," writes Carlyle, "has a 'little brat'; but the poor little thing must have died soon; in Noble's inexact lists there is no trace of its ever having lived." To this Mrs. Lomas replies: "Noble's lists are not inexact. He gives the birth of Richard's first daughter as 26th March, 1650, but, following a very usual plan, he puts the sons first, and our 'impatient historian' has not troubled to turn the leaf. The 'little brat' in question, so far from dying young, lived to be over eighty."[1] While denouncing Noble, he was giving himself an exhibition of carelessness such as can seldom have been equalled.

Noble mentions a schedule of Cromwell's estates, "which Schedule poor Noble has found *somewhere*; *not* where he says he did, in *Commons Journal*, 14th May, 1659; and copied, probably with blunders." We are prepared now to expect that the blunders are Carlyle's, and so it proves. If he had read with ordinary attention he would have found that Noble did not say that he took the schedule from the *Commons Journal* of 14th May, 1659; he said that the schedule itself was of that date. It was read in the House on 25th May, and is entered in the *Commons Journal* of that date, where Carlyle would have found it if he had looked at the index or turned over a leaf or two.[2]

Carlyle was not in a position to attack other editors for inaccuracy and carelessness.

2. *The Squire Forgeries*

On 30th January, 1847, Carlyle received a letter from W. Squire, of Yarmouth, a person hitherto unknown to him. Squire wrote that he had in his possession a number of original letters of Oliver Cromwell addressed to one of his (Squire's) ancestors, also named Squire, who had served in the Ironsides and had been one of Cromwell's

[1] Editor's Note, p. lv. [2] Editor's Note, p. lv.; Vol. II. 495.

intimate friends. The original journal of this ancestor was also in the possession of Carlyle's correspondent, together with other contemporary documents ; he enclosed in his letter copies of some of them. These and other writings which Squire sent subsequently to Carlyle were forgeries. Carlyle accepted them as genuine. His reputation for learning and insight, for knowledge of Cromwell and his period, his reliability as an authority, are at stake in this affair, and it is necessary to examine it.

Before looking into the material put before him, the reflection should have occurred to Carlyle that it was unlikely that a man in the close confidence of Cromwell should have remained so long unknown ; for his name does not occur in any of the records of the time.

In his first letter, Squire sent Carlyle what purported to be a copy of a letter written by Cromwell ; he said " that letter is copied in my prayer book from the original verbatim." The letter began thus : " Deere Friend,— Wee have secret and sure hints that a meeting of the malignants takes place at loweastof in Co. Suffolk on tuesday," etc.[1]

That should have been enough to expose the fraud. For " Dear Friend " is a style of address never used by Cromwell in any of the two hundred and ninety-two letters published by Carlyle, though " Dear Friend and Lord " occurs, and also " Sir, my noble Friend," and " My very noble friends." When addressing men of high birth, Cromwell sometimes used the word friend in conjunction with lord or noble. Squire's blunder should not have escaped Carlyle. And it is obvious that, when writing to a man who is supposed to have been born and bred in that part of England, and to have been at the time, like Cromwell, staying in the district, Cromwell would not, in a short and urgent note, have given his neighbour a lesson in local geography, informing him that Lowestoft is in the County of Suffolk.

This latter point Carlyle perceived. He met it by the simple expedient of cutting out the words " in Co. Suffolk "

[1] *English Historical Review*, April 1886, " The Squire Papers," by W. Aldis Wright.

when he published the letter, together with many more of W. Squire's forgeries, in *Fraser's Magazine*, in December 1847. Carlyle introduced the letters by saying that Squire "copied me exactly the Cromwell Letters, all words of Cromwell's own"; he described Squire as "a person of perfect veracity, and even of scrupulous exactitude in details; so that not only can his Copies of the Cromwell Letters be taken as correct, or the correctest he could give, but any remark or statement of his concerning them is also to be entirely relied on." It is difficult to see how the words "in Co. Suffolk" could have got into the letter if Squire copied it "exactly," with "scrupulous exactitude," so that it should be "taken as correct"; for the qualifying words, "or as the correctest he could give," might cover a possible misreading of a word, but not an insertion of three words.

In the same first letter Squire sent another document, supposed to be the answer of a Cavalier Commanding Officer to a summons to surrender Burleigh House.

"Copy of letter of answer to summons this is only part of it the remainder is devoured by vermin.

"Hell and brimstone I dam you all for a set of . . . you set of Draimen you to pretend to take Burley House you may drink up all your Curnelz beer before you can do it so get about your bisness and leave ye Grounds before my Gunnes mak you and get you put in prison as Trayters to ye King so be off whil you may

"I dam you all to Hell
"C."[1]

Squire sent Carlyle also what purported to be the copy of a summons to surrender, which was in the same degraded, indecent, tone.

In Carlyle's book there are several genuine examples of the tone employed at that time in a summons to surrender and a reply. When Cromwell was before Kilkenny he sent in a summons, which concluded with the words: "You

[1] *English Historical Review*, April 1886.

may have terms may save you in your lives, liberties and estates, according to what will be fitting for me to grant and you to receive. If you choose for the worst, blame yourselves. In confidence of the gracious blessing and presence of God with His own cause, which this is, by many testimonies, I shall hope for a good issue upon my endeavours. Expecting a return from you, I rest, Your servant, Oliver Cromwell."

The reply was: "Sir,—Your letter I have received; and in answer thereof; I am commanded to maintain this city for his Majesty; which, by the power of God, I am resolved to do.—Sir,—your servant, Wa: Butler."[1]

Carlyle was not perturbed by the spellings, the modern expressions, the vulgarity and indecency of the specimens sent him by Squire as examples of the official tone of a Cavalier superior officer of that time, although he had printed in his own book documents written in a totally different style.

In a second letter, dated 11th February, 1847, Squire informed Carlyle that "The writer of the MS. is one Samuel Squire *if Samuel was his name*, but not being a genealogist I cannot tell, but you can soon learn." The italics are W. Squire's. Nine of the letters attributed to Cromwell were addressed to Samuel, or Sam, or S. Squire. How, then, could Carlyle's correspondent, the owner and copier of these letters, have been in any doubt as to the Christian name? And how was it possible that Carlyle did not notice this extraordinary circumstance?

The only effort he made to test the credibility of his correspondent was to ask Edward Fitzgerald, who lived not far from Squire, to visit him and report. Before Fitzgerald had done this, Carlyle received from Squire copies of a number of his supposed Cromwell letters. He was delighted. "The reading of these old Cromwell Letters," he wrote when he published the letters in *Fraser's Magazine*, "by far the most curious that had ever come to me from such a source, produced an immediate, earnest, almost passionate request to have sight of that old 'Journal of

[1] II., 33, 34.

Samuel Squire,' under any terms, or any guarantee I could offer. Why should my respectable obliging Correspondent still hesitate? These *Letters*, I assured him, if he but sold the Originals as Autographs, were worth hundreds of pounds; the old *Journal of an Ironside* I prized as probably the most curious document in the Archives of England, a piece not to be estimated in tens of thousands. . . . A journey in chase of this Unknown Correspondent and his hidden Papers; any journey, or effort, seemed easy for such a prize."

Squire's answer to this passionate request, with the proposed visit of examination, came by return of post. It was to the effect that, to prevent publication, which might lead to quarrels in his family, he had burned the letters and the journal. He did this on learning that his documents were of great historical importance, and that he could sell them for a sum which would place him in comfortable circumstances for the rest of his life. The truth was that Squire feared a visit from Carlyle, while that credulous simpleton was too eager to believe in Squire's documents to be capable of noticing the absurdity of the stories that were told him.

He wrote to Fitzgerald, 15th June, 1847: "Fancy that I got, copied in Squire's indistinct way, and mostly without dates, some Ten or Twelve of the most curious Letters of Oliver I have ever read (all about the Lincolnshire wars, about seizing of spies and 'pistolling' them buying of horses, helmets, 'velvet gowns' for his wife, etc., etc.); that I wrote instantly to Squire, in consequence, offering to pledge my life and fortune for these old Papers of his, if he would but lend me them for three weeks . . . the wretched man does not know what any scratch of a pen by that old hand may do for one in the utter darkness! Let him for God's sake destroy nothing more. . . . The most curious MS. in all England is burnt up, not to be bought now by the wealth of her Majesty's Exchequer;—and we will try to think it is even *best* so. Oliver shown as a naked Baresark, with his sabre brandished,—tho to me it is not a strange, and is a highly interesting and instructive sight,

in these poor twaddling, quack-spoony times,—might have been a little strong for some of his admirers."

Fitzgerald paid his visit and reported favourably. He said that Squire was "a straightforward, choleric, ingenuous fellow,—a little mad," and a great admirer of Carlyle. The description was just what was desired.

Carlyle proceeded to publish thirty-five supposed letters of Cromwell, and also some lists of names, from the copies sent him. He described his correspondent, whose name he had agreed not to mention, as a "Gentleman of honourable frank aspects and manners; still in his best years, and of robust manful qualities; by no means in any way, the feeble, chimerical or distracted Entity, dug-up from the Seventeenth Century and set to live in this Nineteenth, which some of my readers might fancy him." The honourable correspondent sent him "The following Letters, which require to be printed at once, with my explicit testimony to their authenticity. . . . These Thirty-five Letters are Oliver Cromwell's. . . . Let me hasten to say, then, explicitly once more, that these Letters are of indubitable authenticity. . . . They present to us the same old Oliver whom we know, but in still more distinct lineaments and physiognomy; the features deeply, even coarsely marked,—or, as it were, *enlarged* to the gigantic by unexpected nearness. It is Oliver left to himself; stript bare of all conventional draperies. . . . The attentive reader will catch not only curious minute features of the Civil War, in these rude Letters; but more clearly than elsewhere significant glimpses of Oliver's character and ways . . . perhaps the sight of a great natural Human Soul once more, in whom the stamp of the Divinity is *not* quite abolished by Ages of Cant, and hollow Wiggery of every kind, may do such reader some good."

In his first communication to Carlyle, W. Squire wrote with regard to the "loweastof in Co. Suffolk" letter, "the date is eaten off by vermin." It did not appear strange to Carlyle that the date alone should have been eaten; nor was he surprised to find that vermin had chosen to eat off the dates—and nothing more—of four others of the

supposed letters of Cromwell. " Date gone by moths " (letter 11) records Carlyle without any misgiving : " date and address have vanished, eaten by moths " (letter 12) ; " date eaten by moths " (letter 20) ; " moths " (letter 28).

Twelve letters have no date, eight have only part of a date, four have dates which Carlyle himself rejected as impossible ; only eleven out of the thirty-five are dated in a possible manner.

Seven of the letters are signed " O. C.," one is signed " O." No other letters in Carlyle's collection are signed either " O. C." or " O."

On the address we find " haste " four times ; " haste haste " three times ; " haste ride on spur " twice ; " these in all speed " and " these in all haste." The superscription of one of the 292 genuine letters in Carlyle's book has " These, haste, haste, posthaste." Squire introduced expressions of that sort into eleven of his thirty-five forgeries.

These letters are remarkable for the nourishment which moths found in their dates, for the absence of dates, the wrong dates, the initialled signatures, and the exhortations to " haste." With the single exception mentioned above, no instance of any one of the above peculiarities is to be found in any of the 292 genuine letters published by Carlyle.

Squire's ancestor, to whom Cromwell is supposed to have addressed these letters, is said to have belonged to Cromwell's regiment ; sometimes he figures as " auditor," sometimes as " cornet." Yet in some of the supposed letters Cromwell is made to instruct this young officer to issue commands and express verbal reproofs to his seniors. Did Carlyle really imagine that discipline in the Ironsides was conducted on that system ? Or did he merely ignore everything and notice nothing ?

Every one of the letters produced by Squire is made up of absurd impossibilities or unique peculiarities, with scarcely a single plausible line or phrase. When his powers of invention failed, Squire took to senseless markings, in imitation of cipher. One can imagine his hilarity when

Carlyle published to the world the following comment on these hieroglyphics: "On the same sheet follow four lines of abstruse cipher, with a signature which I take to mean 'Oliver Cromwell.'"

On 23rd January, 1849, Squire visited Carlyle at Chelsea. He told Carlyle that before burning the original Cromwell letters (which he had done in order to prevent the copies from being printed) he had cut out a number of autograph signatures and put them in an envelope, with the intention of giving them to Carlyle, but unluckily they had been taken from him by a pickpocket—who must have been singularly disappointed with his capture. "Something radically honest, even brave and benevolent, was in the man's look," wrote Carlyle in his journal; "large grey eyes, full of innocence yet of unquiet vehemence. Untruth I nowhere detected or suspected of him."

There was a second meeting at Chelsea on 19th April. Squire told his credulous listener a long story of the adventures of his ancestor Squire, the friend of Cromwell—how he was captured by Barbary corsairs, how a quantity of silver plunder lay still hidden in Whittlesea Mere, and much more that was wildly improbable. Squire said that his father had presented a Cromwellian tankard to the landlord of an inn at Norwich, where it was still to be seen; when Carlyle eagerly declared that he would have enquiries made about it, Squire begged him to abstain, for he did not wish the past glories of his family to be discussed.

Into the third edition of the *Letters and Speeches*, published in November 1849, Carlyle introduced all the Squire papers that had appeared originally in *Fraser's Magazine*. He appended a note, which he dated 7th May, 1849, and made further reference to the papers in the Preface, dated 16th October, 1849.

In the note of 7th May he says that he is convinced of "the fundamental authenticity of Squire," and remarks that to hint the contrary "would not be altogether safe for able Editors within wind of this Gentleman!" He says now that the letters "were intrinsically of no importance in the History of Cromwell, my care about

them remaining, what it always was, close neighbour to nothing."

This, of course, was not an accurate statement. Carlyle had announced to the world in *Fraser's Magazine*, and had repeated in correspondence with Edward Fitzgerald, that the letters gave "more clearly than elsewhere significant glimpses of Oliver's character and ways," that they were the most curious he had ever read, worth hundreds of pounds. It was not open to him now to say that they were of no importance, and that he had never taken any interest in them.

In the Preface, dated 16th October, published at the same time as the note of 7th May, Carlyle said that the Squire papers were "for the present, and must for a long time remain, of doubtful authenticity to the world." Nevertheless, he published them. If the documents were of doubtful authenticity, and had no value, even if genuine, as he now asserted, it was disrespectful to the public to take them out of their obscurity in *Fraser's Magazine* and insert them in a standard work upon Oliver Cromwell.

So the matter rested, the forgeries being printed in each successive edition of Carlyle's book.

In March 1885, S. R. Gardiner pointed out that several statements supposed to have been made by Squire's ancestor were historically incorrect. He instanced the assertion that Cromwell's son Oliver was killed in a skirmish before the battle of Marston Moor, whereas he died of smallpox four months earlier; and the statement that Cromwell and the Ironsides were present at the siege of Lynn, which was not the case.

Aldis Wright defended Carlyle. He urged that Squire's ancestor may have been misinformed. He asked "whether it is probable that Squire was qualified by knowledge, education, or literary capacity, to concoct a series of letters professedly by Oliver Cromwell, and palm them off successfully upon the man in all England most likely to detect the fraud—Thomas Carlyle." He thought that the authenticity of a document should be tested, not by examining the document itself, but by considering the

reputations of the person who produced it and the person who accepted it. But the authenticity of the document should have been the test as to the value to be placed upon these reputations. That Carlyle was the man in all England most *un*likely to detect the fraud there is abundant evidence in the careless and irresponsible manner in which he edited Cromwell's letters and speeches. The mistake was in the reputation ; but for the general belief in Carlyle as a most painstaking and conscientious editor—a belief which was based upon Carlyle's own boastful assertions—the Squire papers would from the first have been received with derision by Aldis Wright and by everybody else.

Others followed the lead of Gardiner—Walter Rye, the Norfolk antiquary, Edward Peacock, Colonel Ross. It was shown that Squire was known in Norwich as a practiser of antiquarian hoaxes. The story of an attempt he made to deceive the Rev. Woodward of Norwich, with regard to a stone with "O. C. 1640" cut upon it, was still remembered. Squire had presented to the local museum a lance-head supposed to be from Naseby field, and a pair of stirrups which he asserted were Cromwell's, but the curator did not believe in the genuineness of these objects, and did not exhibit them. Carlyle could have found this out forty years earlier with ease. The prayer-book he never saw, and apparently never asked to see. It contained entries purporting to have been made in the Civil War, which were forgeries by Squire. There was, for instance, the copy of a brass in it, referring to "Thomas Squire de Squierre," which was taken by Squire from a book in the Norwich library, where it was the brass of Sir Thomas Braunstone. Squire had substituted the imaginary name of a Squire ancestor for that of Braunstone, and copied the rest. It was shown also that the list of names which Squire sent to Carlyle contained double names, and Biblical names, far in excess of the normal proportion of such names in the Puritan period. Many other mistakes were exposed, which made it quite plain that the papers submitted to Carlyle had been forged by Squire.

"By competent judges it is now universally admitted," says Firth, himself the most competent of them all, "that these letters are forgeries manufactured for the express purpose of deceiving Carlyle. . . . What right had Carlyle to be so certain that the things were genuine? What tests had he applied to these documents? What precautions had he taken against deception? Carlyle had been taken in by an imposture which did not deceive the dull antiquaries on whom he had poured such scorn. The hater of shams had seen the impostor face to face and taken him for a true man. . . . And that eminent humorist, having avenged Dryasdust, emigrated to New Zealand, where, some twenty years later, he closed in peace those 'large grey eyes full of innocence.'"[1]

Squire was just the man to captivate Carlyle. He was "robust and manful, by no means feeble"; he was "even brave," of "unquiet vehemence." When he heard of the doubts that had been expressed in some journals as to the genuineness of the letters, he sent Carlyle a letter couched in vulgar terms. "Squire, I suppose," wrote Carlyle to Forster, "will have to take his Cudgel, and break the back of an Editor or two; that will perhaps kill the Controversy!"[2] To Fitzgerald he wrote that Squire might use "a tremendous oak stick." That was, for Carlyle, a primitive man, the irresistible argument—a blow with a stick.

3. *The Elucidations*

The publication of the *Letters and Speeches* produced a great change in opinion. It was perceived that, contrary to the Royalist tradition, Cromwell had been a sincere believer in his religion and a steadfast labourer for the nation. He may not have been entirely free from all trace of self-seeking, but it would be unjust to say that he was ignobly ambitious. Thanks to Carlyle, Cromwell has

[1] *Letters and Speeches*, edited by Mrs. Lomas. Introduction by C. H. Firth, pp. xlii.–xlv.

[2] Victoria and Albert Museum—Carlyle's letters to Forster.

stepped into his rightful place among the greatest of Englishmen.

Puritanism was, in religion, an exaggeration of the Reformation ; in conduct, a reaction against the Renaissance. There was no moderation among the Puritans. Nor was there generosity of spirit, graciousness, humanity. The Puritans were narrow and intolerant. Demanding freedom for themselves, they would not extend it to others. Cromwell's practical wisdom helped him to outgrow this failing. When he stood at the head of the Government, tolerance was a necessity, for the Puritans were a minority of the nation, and the army and the Parliament had divergent aims. The spirit of the Parliaments which were elected during the Protectorate was hostile to Government by military despotism. Cromwell never received the co-operation and support of the nation, because his position rested on the military force supplied by a religious sect whose tenets were not those of the bulk of the people. If he had resigned some of his own power in favour of a freely elected Parliament, he might have anticipated the events of 1688. Whether from the opposition of the army or from personal ambitions and prejudices, the change was not made. With Cromwell's death, therefore, the military Puritan Government came to a necessary end. But for the prestige and the ability of Cromwell himself it could not have lasted as long as it did.

The Puritans were strict in religion and austere in conduct, while the Restoration was a period of social depravity in the upper class. On the one side was the Bible and the Solemn League and Covenant ; on the other what Carlyle called the " Nell Gwynn Restoration." He said that since the death of Cromwell the Nell Gwynn spirit had been in control of the Government. In his day, in his part of Scotland, it was still questioned whether good Presbyterians were not committing a sin in submitting to a Government which had repudiated the Solemn League and Covenant.

The reader is " not to imagine that it was Constitution, Liberty of the people to tax themselves, Privilege of

Pc

Parliament, Triennial or annual Parliaments, or any modification of these sublime Privileges now waxing somewhat faint in our admirations, that mainly animated our Cromwells, Pyms, and Hampdens to the heroic efforts we still admire in retrospect. Not these very unreasonable 'Privileges,' but a far other and deeper, which could not be measured; of which these, and all grand social improvements whatsoever, are the corollary. Our ancient Puritan Reformers were, as all Reformers that will ever much benefit this Earth are always, inspired by a Heavenly Purpose. To see God's own Law, then universally acknowledged for complete as it stood in the holy written Book, made good in this world; to see this, or the true unwearied aim and struggle towards this; it was a thing worth living for and dying for! Eternal Justice, that God's Will *be* done on Earth as it is in Heaven: corollaries enough will flow from that, if that be there; if that be not there, no corollary good for much will flow."

It was a mistake to suppose that the Puritans were determined that God's own law should be made good in this world, that they were animated by missionary zeal. They were intent upon their own salvation, and cared little for the spiritual welfare of other persons.

The assertion that the Pyms, Hampdens, and Cromwells were inspired chiefly by a heavenly purpose was an error. Pym was one of the leaders of the Parliament; Hampden became famous because he refused to pay a tax which had not been sanctioned by Parliament; Cromwell declared that it was for the privileges of Parliament that he was fighting.

The feeling of Cromwell was, "No superior!" That is the characteristic attitude of a second son, and Cromwell was the second son of a second son. His great-grandfather, Richard Williams, nephew of Thomas Cromwell, minister of Henry VIII, took the name of Cromwell; he was knighted by Henry. Richard's eldest son, Henry, was knighted by Queen Elizabeth; he built Hinchinbrook House, and earned, by his love of display, the name of the Golden Knight. His eldest son, Oliver, was knighted by

James I. Oliver and his brothers sat in the Parliaments of Elizabeth and James. The second son of Sir Henry was Robert, whose second son was Oliver, the Protector. The second son of a second son will, in the absence of contrary influences, grow up self-assertive, hostile to the prerogatives and precedences of the brother and the uncle, both eldest sons. The age position will make him a rebel against authority. If Oliver Cromwell had been the eldest son of the eldest son it is not improbable that he would have been knighted by Charles I, as his ancestors in the eldest line had been by Henry VIII, Elizabeth, and James I. There would have been no Protector named Cromwell.

One of the chief grievances of the Puritans was the growing tyranny of the bishops, who enjoyed both a spiritual and a temporal dominium. The essence of the Reformation had been the revolt against the control that had been exercised by the priest, which was now being reasserted. Cromwell attacked the episcopal power in his first speech in Parliament. He complained that the Bishop of Winchester had prevented Dr. Beard, Cromwell's old schoolmaster, from denouncing Dr. Alablaster, " who had preached flat Popery at Paul's Cross." He spoke in Parliament in support of a petition, signed by 15,000 London citizens, praying for the abolition of bishops altogether. Carlyle said that the petition craved " to have bishops and their ceremonies radically reformed " ; but it aimed at extirpation, and was supported by the famous Root-and-Branch Party, of which Vane, Hampden, and Cromwell were the leaders. It is extraordinary that Carlyle should make no mention of the Root-and-Branch Party, for he cannot have been ignorant of the fact that Cromwell first came into notice as one of its leaders.

There is little explanation in Carlyle's work of the religious disputes of the time. If we turn to any other authority—to Gardiner, Firth, or Morley—we find the religious controversies fully discussed. No understanding is possible of the character of Cromwell, or of the events with which he was connected, without this investigation.

It is the same with the political strife. The reader's curiosity is left unsatisfied. "The Commons had decided on a 'Grand Petition and Remonstrance,' to set forth what their griefs and necessities really were, and really would require to have done for them. The Debate upon it, very celebrated in those times, came on this day, Monday, 22nd November. The longest Debate ever yet known in Parliament: and the stormiest,—nay, had it not been for Hampden's soft management, 'we had like to have sheathed our swords in each other's bowels,' says Warwick; which I find otherwise to be true. The Remonstrance passed by a small majority. It can be read still in Rushworth, drawn up in precise business order; the whole 206 articles of it,—every line of which once thrilled electrically into all men's hearts, as torpid as it has now grown. 'The chimes of Margaret's were striking two in the morning when we came out.' It was on this occasion that Oliver, 'coming downstairs,' is reported to have said: He would have sold all and gone to New England, had the Remonstrance not passed; a vague report, gathered over dining-tables long after, to which the reader need not pay more heed than it merits."

Carlyle was interested in the phrase about swords being sheathed in bowels; in the chimes at two in the morning; in the figure of Cromwell "coming downstairs"; and in the after-dinner gossip of a later generation about a remark Cromwell is reported to have made. For the subject of the stormy debate, which thrilled electrically into the heart of Cromwell and all other men, Carlyle cared nothing at all.

"In these weeks, once more, there is an intensely interesting Treaty going on in the Isle of Wight; Treaty of Forty days with the King; solemn Parliamentary Commissioners on one hand, Majesty with due Assistants on the other, very solemnly debating and negotiating day after day, for forty days and longer in the Town of Newport there. The last hope of Presbyterian Royalism in this world. . . . Treaty which came to nothing, as all the others had done . . . a mere torpor on the page of

History; which the reader shall conceive for himself *ad libitum*."

The reader is left to imagine for himself what the dispute can have been between King, Parliament, and army, in which the fate of the monarchy was involved. The torpor was Carlyle's.

"The trial of Charles Stuart falls not to be described in this place; the deep meanings that lie in it cannot be so much as glanced at here." Surely the reader might be allowed some account of the trial, and be given a hint of the charges brought against the King. Cromwell was one of those responsible for the issue; he was interested, if Carlyle was not.

The "deep meanings" Carlyle did "glance at," just after saying that he would do no such thing. "This action of the English Regicides," he says, "did in effect strike a damp like death through the heart of Flunkeyism universally in this world. Whereof Flunkeyism, Cant, Cloth-worship, or whatever ugly name it have, has gone about incurably sick ever since; and is now at length, in these generations, very rapidly dying. The like of which action will not be needed for a thousand years again! Needed, alas—not till a new genuine Hero-worship has arisen, has perfected itself, and had time to degenerate into a Flunkeyism and Cloth-worship again! Which I take to be a very long date indeed."

If cant was very rapidly dying in his day, why did Carlyle spend so much of his time and energy in denouncing it? Why abuse it in its last moments?

If flunkeyism, like cant, was moribund when Carlyle wrote, he did his utmost to revive it. At the earliest possible moment he begins to speak of Cromwell as "His Highness," and thenceforth he is seldom mentioned in any other way. If any biographer, writing the life of a king, were to plaster his pages with the title "His Majesty" as Carlyle does with Cromwell's "His Highness," he would be regarded as a flunkey of flunkeys. In forty-one pages of his book Carlyle mentions Cromwell sixty-one times. He is designated "Oliver Protector" once, "the Protector"

once, "Oliver" once, "His Highness" no less than fifty-eight times out of the sixty-one. He receives that title six times on one page.[1] His surname, Cromwell, is eliminated, as if he were a king. The family also are always given their new titles—"My Lord Henry," "the Lady Mary," "the Lady Frances."

Carlyle revels in great names when they are connected with the Cromwell family. "'This day,' say the old Newspapers, 'the most Illustrious Lady, the Lady Frances Cromwell, youngest daughter of His Highness the Lord Protector, was married to the most noble gentleman Mr. Robert Rich, son of the Lord Rich, Grandchild of the Earl of Warwick, and of the Countess-Dowager of Devonshire; in the presence of their Highnesses, and of his Grandfather, and Father, and the said Countess, with many other persons of high honour and quality.' At Whitehall, this blessed Wednesday; all difficulties now overcome;—which we are glad to hear of, 'though our friends truly were very few!'—And on the Thursday of next week follows, at Hampton Court, the Lady Mary's own Wedding. Wedding 'to the most noble lord, the Lord Fauconberg,' lately returned from his Travels in foreign parts; a Bellasis, of the Yorkshire kindred so named,—which was once very high in Royalism, but is now making other connexions."

Carlyle's delight is evident from his own interjections—"this blessed Wednesday," "we are glad to hear of," "once very high in Royalism, but now making other connexions." In a previous passage he had proudly dismissed a lesser suitor. "Anthony Ashley Cooper, I am told is looking towards this Lady Mary; a desirable match for any youth of ambition,—but not attainable I doubt by Ashley."

The divinities named by Carlyle were true heroes; all others were sham heroes. Genuflexions and adorations before his chosen were evidence of complete and perfect hero-worship; similar prostrations before other gods were examples of flunkeyism. But even sham heroes were, if

[1] III., pp. 100–40.

kings, approached by Carlyle in the flunkey spirit. He seldom names a king without using "His Majesty," or a Royal prince without "His Royal Highness."

With regard to Ireland, Carlyle wrote: "Oliver's proceedings here have been the theme of much loud criticism and sibylline execration; into which it is not our plan to enter at present. We shall give these Irish Letters of his in their own natural figure, and without any commentary whatever." Then, as one has learned to expect, he entered at once upon a long explanation of "Oliver's proceedings," with ample "commentary" on the letters. He must have known that he could not pass over Cromwell's conduct in Ireland without comment; he must, indeed, have felt himself full of the exhortations and denunciations which immediately burst forth. Why, then, as he was just about to let loose the flood, should he solemnly declare he would do no such thing? It was partly a rhetorical trick, partly a shirking of responsibility for what he was about to say.

"One could pity the poor Irish people; their case is pitiable enough! The claim they started with, in 1641, was for religious freedom. Their claim, we can now see, was just: essentially just, though full of intricacy; difficult to render clear and concessible."

The Irish did not begin with a claim for religious liberty, nor, if they had done so, would there have been any difficult intricacy in the matter. Their claim, which was at first for the return of confiscated lands, was, according to Carlyle, "entered upon and prosecuted, by such methods as were never yet available for asserting any claim in this world! Treachery and massacre: what could come of it? . . . Unveracious, violent, disobedient men. False in speech;—alas, false in thought, first of all; who have never let the Fact tell its own harsh story to them; who have said always to the harsh Fact, 'Thou art not that way, thou art this way!' The fact, of course, asserts that it *is* that way: the Irish Projects end in perpetual discomfiture."

The Irish were "unveracious," and "false in thought."

How do we know? Because their "Projects end in perpetual discomfiture." Cromwell, when he took his turn at massacring, was an "armed soldier, terrible as Death, relentless as Doom; doing God's Judgments on the Enemies of God!" That they were enemies of God is proved by the "harsh fact" that Cromwell's sword proved the stronger.

"Ireland, under this arrangement, would have grown up gradually into a sober diligent drab-coloured population; developing itself, most probably, in some form of Colonistic Protestantism. . . . But the Ever-blessed Restoration came upon us. All that arrangement was torn up by the roots; and Ireland was appointed to develop itself as we have seen. Not in the drab-coloured Puritan way;—in what other way is still a terrible dubiety, to itself and to us! It will be by some gospel of Veracity I think, when the Heavens are pleased to send such. This 'Curse of Cromwell,' so-called, is the only Gospel of that kind I can yet discover to have ever been fairly afoot there."

The attempt to convert Ireland by force was a failure from the first; it had the effect of separating England and Ireland for generations. Carlyle gave it his blessing.

After the publication of this book Carlyle paid two short visits to Ireland, accompanied by Gavan Duffy, with whom, on the second occasion, went W. E. Forster, afterwards the Chief Secretary. Carlyle's solution of the problem of the Government of Ireland was coercion, "laying a hearty horse-whip over that back of yours." Forster may have been influenced by these views.

Carlyle's book is a chant of triumph, a Hebrew psalm of praise and glory. "Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered!" Success is the sole criterion of merit. It mattered nothing that the Commonwealth and Protectorate ultimately disappeared. Cromwell himself, "the flame-girt Heaven's-messenger," remained enthroned on high until the day of his death. His career, therefore, had been a personal success.

His study of Cromwell confirmed Carlyle in his dislike

of Parliaments and his longing for a military despot. And yet Cromwell himself, with an army at his back, did his utmost to obtain the suffrages of the nation, and made great efforts to work with an elective Parliament; he desired above all, as he said, a Government by consent. Cromwell knew that without public support no Government can endure. Carlyle, on the other hand, considered that if a Hero is sent by God to govern, the feelings and opinions of the nation should be ignored. He was so intent upon his own view that he attributed it to Cromwell, ignoring Cromwell's own opinion and conduct.

Much of the book is given to descriptions in the manner of a journalistic reporter, entertaining copy of a personal kind. The various personages are labelled with nicknames which are ever after attached to them, as an aid to memory. Ludlow is "solid"; Lilburn is "noisy John"; Colonel Fryer is "drunken"; Whitelocke is "dull Bulstrode"; and so on. When Cromwell makes a speech, the special correspondent describes the scene in the House, the manner of the speaker, the demeanour of the audience, the gossip in the lobby. In the vivid presentation of a scene Carlyle was unrivalled.

The book was not designed to be a history, nor even a biography; it purported to be no more than a reprint of the letters and speeches of Cromwell, with elucidations. These latter resemble the diary, or the reminiscences, of one who has been behind the scenes and has a gift for portraiture and colour. Carlyle exhibits his hero writing and speaking and flashing his sword, the rays of Godhood streaming forth from his bodily presence. He proves that Cromwell was an honest man, and thinks that is all that need be said; whereas it is one of the least of the important facts. There is much more in the history of that time than is included in questions of personal honesty and personal ambition. Seventeen years before Carlyle, Macaulay had described Cromwell as the greatest soldier and ablest statesman of the day. Carlyle could think of nothing but Cromwell's inner conscience.

By his wonderful power Carlyle has made Cromwell a

living man. We cannot but admire him, and love him as a fellow man. There is an austere enthusiasm in Carlyle's book, which becomes communicated to the reader.

But a feeling of astonishment, as well as of disappointment, must remain, that Carlyle did not think it necessary to give an adequate account of the Revolution, its origin, its course, and its consequences; a sufficient explanation of the religious and political disputes of the time, of the great events with which Cromwell was connected, the problems he had to face, and the methods he employed to meet them.

CHAPTER XXI

ON THE ROCKS

ALTHOUGH Lady Harriet Baring told Carlyle in May 1843 that she " meditated " calling upon his wife, there is no record of her having done so until two years had elapsed. Not until the 10th June, 1845, was Mrs. Carlyle able to write to Jeannie Welsh (Babbie) that Lady Harriet had been to tea at Cheyne Row. Then at the end of September 1845, when Carlyle was in Scotland, Lady Harriet, being in town at Bath House, sent her carriage for Mrs. Carlyle, and the two women spent the evening together.

Mrs. Buller had prophesied that they would never be friends. Brave attempts were made on both sides, but there was no natural affinity. Lady Harriet was accustomed to rule, while Mrs. Carlyle would not be ruled. To Babbie Welsh, the recipient of her most candid confidences, she said of Lady Harriet, " I have an unconquerable persuasion that she does not and never can like me." In November Mrs. Carlyle went with her husband to Bay House, Alverstoke, the country home of the Barings, for a stay of six weeks. She reported to her cousin that " however long and pleasantly I may live beside Lady Harriet, I am sure I shall never feel *warm affection* for her nor inspire her with warm affection—her intercourse will remain an *honour for me*, never be a heartfelt delight—as it might be if she were as loving as she is charming." When the acquaintance had lasted some years, Mrs. Carlyle said of it that " the longer we know one another and the more we are intimate to outward appearance, the less have we to say to one another when *alone*."

Lady Harriet gathered about her many of the notabilities

of the day. The most frequent attendants in her literary circle were Carlyle, Thackeray, Mill, Tennyson, Milnes, Kingsley, Jowett, Goldwin Smith, Spedding, Sir Henry Taylor, Tom Taylor, and Venables. These were the favourites in a very large court. Among them Carlyle had a special place.

He, for his part, called Lady Harriet " the most queenlike woman " he had ever known. He enjoyed the society of the distinguished, interesting, well-mannered people he met ; he was never so lively and entertaining as in the company of Lady Harriet and her guests. He felt at his best, and was gratified with the homage he received.

Any woman in Mrs. Carlyle's place would have been jealous. " It chafed Jane that he should go elsewhere for intellectual companionship," says one of her own sex.[1] " And so the married state," wrote Mrs. Carlyle, " has come if not precisely to immortal smash as yet, at least to within a hair's breadth of it."

In the summer of 1846, Mrs. Carlyle went to Seaforth House, Liverpool, to stay with the Paulets. On his way to Scotland for the usual summer visit, Carlyle stopped at Liverpool to see his wife. He had been invited, with her, to join Lady Harriet and her husband, in a short tour. He told Jane that he had accepted for himself. She became incensed. Again she threatened to leave him. He went to Scotsbrig whence he wrote to her, 8th August : " In what a black baleful cloud for myself and thee are all our affairs involved to thy eyes, at this moment threatening shipwreck if we do not mind ! . . . My mother enters with a message for kind remembrances to you—emphatic earnest message, evidently far sincerer than such almost ever are. Poor old woman ! She said yesterday, ' does Jane never mean to see me again then, at all ? ' " The weather being rainy he thought the Barings might " decide on *not* coming. How incredible is it to my poor little Jeannie, and yet how certain in fact, that an intimation to that effect would be among the *gladdest* I could get in a small way during these days !

[1] *Thomas Carlyle*, by Mary Agnes Hamilton, 1926, p. 84.

I will write to the lady to-morrow that I am here according to engagement, but of invitation to her I cannot have much."

The words " in a small way " are not reassuring. There does not seem to be any reason why he should put off writing till the next day. Why not do it at once ? The protestation of his desire to retreat from his engagement would have been more convincing if he had actually written the letter of excuse, which he talked about, but did not send. He joined the Barings, as he had always intended to do, in spite of his wife's protests. He had not the ready sympathy which would have shown him that her distress was such that he should have humoured it whether it was reasonable or not.

In these circumstances a woman will carry her complaints to her friends. Mrs. Carlyle confided in Mazzini, who tried to help her with kind and sympathetic letters. She said afterwards that Mazzini had a " power of identifying himself with those he loves—at least in their *sorrows*, which I never saw equalled."[1]

Mrs. Carlyle then took her sorrows to Miss Geraldine Jewsbury at Manchester. The visit was a great success. Mrs. Carlyle was able to write to her husband that she was very glad that she had gone just when she did. The kindness she had received would make Manchester always dear to her. To Helen Welsh she wrote, 19th August : " People who are at ease in Zion—I myself when I have been so to a certain extent—may have found Geraldine very teazing and absurd—but let one be ill—suffering—especially *morbidly* suffering, and then one knows what Geraldine is ! All the intelligent sympathy and real practical good that lies in her ! "

Twenty years afterwards, when editing his wife's letters, Carlyle wrote : " She had gone to Geraldine's quiet place in Manchester, rather as in duty bound than with much hope of solacement or even of greater quietude there ; both of which, however, she found, so beautiful was Geraldine's affectionate skill with her, delicacy, wise silent sympathy

[1] *Letters of J. W. Carlyle*, edited by Dr. L. Huxley.

and unwearied assiduity (coming by surprise too), for which she never forgot Geraldine."

Mrs. Carlyle accepted her husband's decision that his intimacy with Lady Harriet Baring was not to be interrupted. He was victorious; he chided her. She had written to say that she would join him if he wished it, but he told her to return to Chelsea, " and remember one thing, to write a little oftener to me, and as near the old tone as you can come to, before the spider-webs got upon the loom at all."

Mrs. Carlyle's health, always precarious, was very unsatisfactory at this time. There was so much sleeplessness that morphia was sometimes resorted to, but no morphia habit or craving supervened. There is no reason to suppose that Mrs. Carlyle became saturated with morphia. The situation of affairs would have disturbed a woman in perfect health. When we find that Mrs. Carlyle became nervous soon after she entered, in 1845, the society over which Lady Harriet presided, and that she recovered after that lady's death in 1857, we are justified in the conclusion that the natural jealousy which every healthy woman would have felt was the prime cause of the disturbance. If there had been no such reaction in Mrs. Carlyle then indeed her condition would have been alarming.

When Carlyle spoke, in the Ecclefechan manner, of the danger of fame, he little thought that, in his own case, it would produce estrangement between himself and his wife. Every advance in Carlyle's reputation and position made him less dependent on his wife. He went to houses to which she was not invited. There was at first a ban upon her. Then she followed her husband into the fashionable world, at the heels of Lady Harriet Baring. She perceived how close was the intimacy between him and her, and her nervous system was upset by the discovery.

In October 1847 Emerson arrived from America, and was received as a welcome guest at Cheyne Row. The visit was not a success, owing chiefly to the overbearing, domineering manner which Carlyle now indulged in. When Emerson

gave a lecture in London, on the "Spiritual Unity of all Anointed Beings," at the close Carlyle emitted a loud, contemptuous laugh. He behaved now like a licensed bully. When Emerson was asked for an introduction to the great man he replied that he would not expose any friend to be maltreated.

Carlyle's conversation was said, by those entitled to judge, to be the most impressive and remarkable of any that they had ever heard. Carlyle first, and the rest nowhere, was the verdict. His chief rival, Macaulay, was less magnetic and impressive. But, as Macaulay's biographer, Sir George Trevelyan, has remarked, "No one in the company ever had personal reasons for wishing a word of his unsaid, or a look or a tone recalled."[1] The same could not be said of Carlyle.

During the winter of 1847–8 Mrs. Carlyle was constantly ill with colds and coughs. She was unable to accompany her husband to Bay House in January 1848. Carlyle wrote to her a letter ostensibly of condolence, really full of his own complaints: "Why do I complain to poor thee, confined to thy own bed at present? Well, I will not complain. Only, if *you* had been strong, I would have told you how very weak and wretched I was." Then he proceeded to do so. Obviously he was unsympathetic, absorbed in his own troubles, indifferent to hers.

In May 1848 occurred the death of Lord Ashburton. In the autumn the Carlyles were at the Grange for five weeks with the new owners, formerly Mr. and Lady Harriet Baring, now Lord and Lady Ashburton.

An American lady, Margaret Fuller, recorded her impressions of Carlyle during the Cromwell period, when he had reached his most arrogant stage. She spent an evening at Cheyne Row. "That first time," she said, "I was delighted with him. He was in a very sweet humour—full of wit and pathos, without being overbearing or oppressive. I was quite carried away with the rich flow of his discourse; and the hearty, noble earnestness of his personal being brought back the charm which once

[1] *Letters of Lord Macaulay*, III., 238, by Sir G. O. Trevelyan.

was upon his writing before I wearied of it. I admired his Scotch—his way of singing his great full sentences, so that each one was like the stanza of a narrative ballad ! " Carlyle was at his best with a new acquaintance, when no others were present. Any addition to the company tempted him to display, for then he had an audience.

Miss Fuller met him again, at a dinner party, and her comment then was : " I understand the habit and power of haranguing have increased very much upon him, so that you are a perfect prisoner when he once has got hold of you. To interrupt him is a physical impossibility. If you get a chance to remonstrate a moment, he raises his voice and bears you down." On another occasion : " All Carlyle's talk that evening was a defence of mere force, success the test of right. If people would not behave well, put collars round their necks. Find a hero, and let them be his slaves. It was very Titanic and Anticelestial. . . . Accustomed to the infinite wit and exuberant richness of his writings, his talk is still an amazement and a splendour scarcely to be faced with steady eyes. He does not converse ; only harangues. . . . Carlyle, indeed, is arrogant and overbearing ; but in his arrogance there is no littleness—no self-love. It is the heroic arrogance of some old Scandinavian conqueror, it is his nature and the untameable impulse that has given him power to crush the dragons. You do not love him, perhaps, nor revere ; and perhaps, also, he would only laugh at you if you did ; but you like him heartily, and like to see him the powerful smith, the Siegfried, melting out the old iron in his furnace till it glows to a sunset red, and burns you, if you senselessly go too near."

Titanic and powerful, arrogant and overbearing, a Siegried who believes in force, in success as the test of right. " Oh, how strong you are ! " sings the siren, " how splendidly masterful ! " ; and the poor man rushes on to destruction. The period of heady madness lasted from *Cromwell* to *Latter-day Pamphlets*, until he found himself, high and solitary, on the rocks.

CHAPTER XXII

"LATTER-DAY PAMPHLETS"

IN the *Reminiscences* (1866), Carlyle says that the radicalism of his early years had been modified by "Time and his Events (1848; study of Oliver, etc.)." He had been, and he remained, a radical in one sense—a person who would like to make great changes in the world; but he was never a believer in democracy. In his case, as in that of many others, the word Radical indicates merely the man who is dissatisfied with his position in the world. In 1830 he had been eager for the Reform Bill, and had desired the abolition of the House of Lords. But when he had risen from obscurity to fame, from the cottage of his parents to the mansions of Peers, he had no wish to pull down the society which he had entered.

The anti-democratic, Hero doctrine was first propounded in *Sartor Resartus*, in 1831. Thenceforth there was no fundamental change in Carlyle's views. The Revolutions of 1848 alarmed him and caused him to express, in an intemperate manner, opinions which he had long held.

He began with "Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question," published in *Fraser's Magazine*, December 1849.

Much of the essay is devoted to denunciations of "Exeter Hall-Philanthropy," the "ABOLITION-OF-PAIN ASSOCIATION," the "Sluggard-and-Scoundrel Protection Society," the "deep froth organs of 'Benevolence,' 'Fraternity,' 'Emancipation-principle,' 'Christian Philanthropy,' and other most amiable-looking but most baseless, and in the end baleful and all bewildering jargon." Then comes the nickname given to Political Economy which has adhered to it ever since. It is, "what we might call, by way of eminence, the *dismal science*."

Under the influence of the philanthropists and sentimentalists, Europe, said Carlyle, was "nearing the Niagara Falls." His dislike of these people brought him, by recoil, to the other extreme, of callous inhumanity. After observing that in England "several millions are hanging on the verge of continual famine," he says: "But, thank Heaven, our interesting Black population are all doing remarkably well. 'Sweet blighted lilies,'—as the American epitaph on the nigger child has it,—sweet blighted lilies, they are holding-up their head again. . . . Our beautiful Black darlings are at last happy; with little labour except to the teeth, *which* surely, in these excellent horse-jaws of theirs, will not fail! . . . Sitting yonder with their beautiful muzzles up to their ears in pumpkins, imbibing sweet pulps and juices, the grinder and incisor teeth ready for ever new work.

"I never thought," he says, "the 'right of negroes' worth much discussing, nor the rights of men in any form; the grand point, as I once said, is the *mights* of men,—what portion of their 'rights' they have a chance of getting sorted out, and realised, in this confused world." The negro "has an indisputable and perpetual *right* to be compelled, to do competent work for his living.

"And if 'slave' mean essentially 'servant hired for life,'—for life, or by a contract of long continuance and not easily dissoluble—I ask once more, whether, in all human beings, the 'contract of long continuance' is not precisely the contract to be desired, were the right terms once found for it?"

In August 1863, when the American Civil War was at its height, he repeated these sentiments in *Macmillan's Magazine* under the heading "Ilias Americana in nuce" (the American Iliad in a nutshell):

"*Peter of the North* (*to Paul of the South*): Paul, you unaccountable scoundrel, I find you hire your servants for life, not by the month or year as I do. You are going straight to Hell, you——

"*Paul*: Good words, Peter. The risk is my own. I

am willing to take the risk. Hire you your servants by the month or the day, and get straight to Heaven ; leave me to my own method.

" *Peter :* No, I won't, I will beat your brains out first ! (and is trying dreadfully ever since, but cannot yet manage it).

" T. C."

" You are not ' slaves ' now " (in the British West Indies) : " nor do I wish, if it can be avoided, to see you slaves again : but decidedly you have to be servants to those that are born *wiser* than you, that are born lords of you ; servants to the Whites, if they *are* (as what mortal can doubt they are ?) born wiser than you. . . . Quashee, if he will not help in bringing out the spices, will get himself made a slave again (which state will be a little less ugly than his present one), and with beneficent whip, since other methods avail not, will be compelled to work."

Evidently Carlyle thought that the condition of slavery was that which God had ordained for the negro. He brought forward every argument he could think of in favour of it, enlarged upon the defects attendant upon other methods of employment, and sneered at the Abolitionists.

In the *Reminiscences* he spoke contemptuously of " Yankeeland, during that beautiful Nigger agony or ' Civil War ' of theirs." When he wrote that, Carlyle had reached the age of 71. Some years later he came across " The Harvard Memorial Biographies " with notices of the young men from Harvard who had been killed in the Civil War. The book was shown him by Mrs. Lowell, whose son had been among the killed. When an individual case was put personally before him Carlyle's sympathy was at once aroused. The old man took the bereaved mother's hand, and said, with tears in his eyes, " I doubt I have been mistaken." Mistaken in what ? Not in his views concerning " Heaven's Laws " with regard to " Black Quashee," for they lie at the core of his teaching, but in his estimate of the fighting powers of the combatants.

If the South had been victorious Carlyle would not have said he had been mistaken, however many Harvard men had given their lives for the cause they espoused. Moreover the confession of error was for a private audience, not for the public. The "Nigger Question" and "Ilias in Luce" continued to be published by Carlyle's authority, without modification.

After the "Nigger Question" came the *Latter-day Pamphlets*, eight in number, beginning in February 1850. The original intention had been to write twelve pamphlets, and to re-issue the series in two volumes; but the death of Sir Robert Peel on the 1st July, 1850, brought the enterprise to an end. Its genesis may therefore be surmised. At this time Carlyle had definite hopes of a public career, as a supporter of Peel, and he wrote these pamphlets in order to further his candidature.

The Revolutions of 1848 seemed to Carlyle to be signs of another impending conflagration like that of 1789 in France, which God was preparing as punishment for man's wickedness. He wrote to Forster, 10th October, 1848, that the justly angry Gods were preparing a Noah's Deluge.[1]

In the first pamphlet, "The Present Time," Carlyle declared that, at the time he was writing, the year 1850, the world was travelling rapidly to destruction, and that something tremendous would have to be done. "There must be a new world, if there is to be any world at all."

After much denunciation of Democracy, Carlyle concluded with an imaginary "Speech of the British Prime Minister" (Sir Robert Peel, though he was not then in power), to "the Pauper Populations of these Realms." They are to be "put under law as soldiers are," formed into "Industrial Regiments, not to fight the French or others, who are peaceable enough towards us; but to fight the Bogs and Wildernesses at home and abroad, and to chain the Devils of the Pit which are walking too openly among us." "My indigent unguided friends," continues the Prime Minister, "I should think some work might be

[1] Victoria and Albert Museum—Letters of Carlyle to John Forster.

discoverable for you. Enlist, stand drill ; become, from a nomadic Banditti of Idleness, Soldiers of Industry ! I will lead you to the Irish Bogs . . . to the English fox-coverts, furze-grown Commons, New Forests, Salisbury Plains : likewise to the Scotch Hill-sides, and bare rushy slopes, which as yet feed only sheep. . . . To each of you I will then say : Here is work for you ; strike into it with man-like, soldier-like obedience and heartiness, according to the methods here prescribed,—wages follow for you without difficulty ; all manner of just remuneration, and at length emancipation itself follows. Refuse to strike into it ; shirk the heavy labour, disobey the rules,—I will admonish and endeavour to incite you ; if in vain, I will flog you ; if still in vain, I will at last shoot you,—and make God's Earth, and the forlorn-hope in God's Battle, free of you. Understand it, I advise you ! "

The same spirit is evinced in the next pamphlet, on " Model Prisons " : " Indeed, it is wonderful to hear what account we at present give ourselves of the punishment of criminals. No ' revenge '—O Heavens, no ; all preachers on Sundays strictly forbid that ; and even (at least on Sundays) prescribe the contrary of that. It is for the sake of ' example,' that you punish ; to ' protect society ' and its purse and skin ; to deter the innocent from falling into crime ; and especially withal, for the purpose of improving the poor criminal himself,—or at least, of hanging and ending him, that he may not grow worse. . . . My friends, will you permit me to say that all this, to one poor judgment among your number, is the mournfullest twaddle that human tongues could shake from them ? " Only those who " have breathed since birth the poisonous atmosphere of universal Cant, could believe such a thing. Cant moral, Cant religious, Cant political. . . . I take the liberty of asserting that there is one valid reason, and only one, for either punishing a man or rewarding him in this world ; one reason, which ancient piety could well define. That you may do the will and commandment of God with regard to him ; that you may do justice to him. . . . If you love your thief or murderer, if Nature and eternal Fact

love him, then do as you are now doing. But if Nature and Fact do *not* love him?"

"Caitiff, we hate thee; and discern for some six thousand years now, that we are called upon by the whole Universe to do it. Not with a diabolic but with a divine hatred. God himself, we have always understood, 'hates sin' with a most authentic, celestial and eternal hatred. A hatred, a hostility inexorable, unappeasable, which blasts the scoundrel, and all scoundrels ultimately, into black annihilation and disappearance from the sum of things. . . . Revenge, my friends! revenge, and the natural hatred of scoundrels, and the ineradicable tendency to *revancher* oneself upon them, and pay them what they have merited: this is forevermore intrinsically a correct, and even a divine feeling in the mind of every man. Only the excess of it is diabolic; the essence I say is man-like, and even god-like,—a monition sent to poor man by the Maker himself. . . . In brotherhood with the base and foolish I, for one, do not mean to live. . . . While hope yet lasts, I will treat these as brothers fallen insane;—when hope has ended, with tears grown sacred and wrath grown sacred, I will cut them off in the name of God! It is at my peril, if I do not."

Society may, indeed, be driven to suppress completely the really incorrigible loafer or criminal, either by permanent imprisonment or by execution. That may well be one of the developments of the future. But there is no need to hate these unfortunates. If God hates sin it does not follow that He hates the sinner. Ought we to hate a naughty child? We punish the child, and shed sacred tears while doing so, but it is the naughtiness, not the child, that we hate. The weeping itself purges any unkind feeling we may have felt towards the child. We cannot weep and hate.

Carlyle visited the Millbank Penitentiary. He saw in the prisoners "ape-faces, imp-faces, angry dog-faces, heavy sullen ox-faces. . . . These were the subjects whom our brave Captain and Prison-Governor was appointed to command, and reclaim to *other* service, by

the 'method of love,' with a treadwheel abolished. Hopeless for evermore such a project. These abject ape, wolf, ox, imp and other diabolic-animal specimens of humanity, who of the very gods could ever have commanded them by love ? A collar round the neck and a cart whip flourished over the back ; these, in a just and steady human hand, were what the gods would have appointed. . . . Mark it, my diabolic friends, I mean to lay leather on the backs of you, collars round the necks of you . . . and sweep you pretty rapidly into some Norfolk Island, into some special Convict Colony or remote domestic Moorland, into some stone-walled Silent-System, under hard drill-sergeants, just as Rhadamanthus, and inflexible as he. . . . Scoundrel is scoundrel ; that remains for ever a fact ; and there exists not in the earth whitewash that can make the scoundrel a friend of this Universe ; he remains an enemy if you spend your life in whitewashing him. He won't whitewash ; this one won't."

These ideas, then already a hundred years out of date, had been learned by Carlyle in the primitive Ecclefechan society. In the ferocious period of the eighteenth century Judge Heath had laid it down that " There is no regenerating a felon in this life." Carlyle retained that mediæval belief, and endeavoured to prevent the spread of humaner and more enlightened principles.

His remarks about John Howard, the prisoners' friend, are painful reading : " Howard is a beautiful Philanthropist, eugolised by Burke, and in most men's minds a sort of beatified individual. How glorious, having finished off one's affairs in Bedfordshire, or in fact finding them very dull, inane, and worthy of being quitted and got away from, to set out on a cruise over the Jails of Britain ; then, finding that answer, over the Jails of the habitable Globe ! 'A voyage of discovery, a circumnavigation of charity ; to collate distresses, to gauge wretchedness, to take the dimensions of human misery ' ;—really it is very fine.

" On the whole, I have myself nothing but respect, comparatively speaking, for the dull, solid Howard, and

his 'benevolence,' and other impulses that set him cruising: Heaven had grown weary of Jail-fevers. . . . Heaven created him; disgusted him with the grocer business; tried him with Calvinism, rural ennui, and sore bereavement in his Bedfordshire retreat;—and, in short, at last got him set to his work, and in a condition to achieve it. For which I am thankful to Heaven; and do also, with doffed hat, humbly salute John Howard. A practical solid man, if a dull and even dreary."

Howard was the son of a successful London tradesman, who apprenticed him to a firm of wholesale grocers in the City. Before the term of apprenticeship had been completed, the father died, leaving his son in affluent circumstances, and the owner of a country estate. He left the city, married, and lived on his property. On the death of his wife he travelled abroad. In 1773, at the age of forty-seven, he became Sheriff for his county, Bedfordshire. Among his duties was the inspection of the county prisons; he found the conditions to be barbarous, and was led, by his sympathy for human suffering, to make efforts on behalf of prisoners which ultimately developed into a self-sacrificing crusade over the whole of Europe. He underwent great dangers and privations, nearly succumbed to jail-fever, and finally, at the age of sixty-three, died in Russia, of the plague, contracted as the result of his devotion to the needs of his fellow creatures. An inscription on the base of his statue in St. Paul's says that he died "a victim to the perilous and benevolent attempt to ascertain the cause of, and find an efficacious remedy for, the plague."

Carlyle says that Howard was inspired by the desire to appear "glorious," and "very fine"; that he visited prisons in order to get away from dull and inane country life; that another motive was "disgust at the grocer business"; that he examined prisons on the Continent because he found his investigations in England to "answer"; that he was "a dull and even dreary" person; finally that it was heaven that "got him set to his work," so that really it was not his doing at all.

One is reminded of the accusation brought against a man who was in the habit of visiting an afflicted relative, and was told by other members of the family, who stayed away, that he did it "to put us in the wrong." Carlyle harboured the miserable feeling that philanthropists like Howard were inspired by nothing better than the desire to put him and the rest of the world in the wrong.

In the next two pamphlets, "Downing Street," and "The New Downing Street," Carlyle endeavoured to further his candidature for a political career, by putting forward some practical suggestions. He proposed that the Crown "shall have power of nominating the half-dozen or half-score officers of the Administration, whose presence is thought necessary in Parliament, to official seats there, without reference to any constituency." The great object is to obtain the ablest men, irrespective of the electors, who are quite incapable of distinguishing between worth and unworth; this can only be done by the Crown, on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The Army and Navy had cost vast sums in the previous thirty-five years and had done no fighting. The Army should be disbanded, and its place taken by Industrial Regiments of citizens who would be trained to arms, without detriment to their civilian occupations. The ships of the Navy should be busy, "every seventy-four of them, carrying-over streams of Industrials to the immeasurable Britain that lies beyond the sea." There should be a "Minister of Justice,—clearing his Model Prisons of their scoundrelism; shipping his scoundrels wholly abroad, under hard and just drill-sergeants . . . into fertile desert countries; to make railways,—one big railway quite across America; fit to employ all the able-bodied scoundrels and efficient Half-pay Officers in Nature!"

At the time when Carlyle was writing, transportation to the Colonies had been abandoned. His appreciation of the value of Colonies is one of the few instances in which, differing from the feeling of the day, he was, nevertheless, right. But he misunderstood the nature of the tie between

Colony and Mother Country. His view was that of the eighteenth century, that a Colony is a territory to be exploited. He proposed that the Governor sent to a Colony should be given "due Power" to deal with its inhabitants as he might think expedient, regardless of their wishes.

"In the course of long strenuous centuries, I can see the State become what it is actually bound to be, the Key-stone of a most real Organisation of Labour. . . . Wise obedience and wise command, I foresee that the regimenting of Pauper Banditti into Soldiers of Industry is but the beginning of this blessed process. . . . All manner of free operatives, as yet unregimented, nomadic under private masters, they, seeing such example and its blessedness, will say: 'Masters, you must regiment us a little; make our interests with you permanent a little, instead of temporary and nomadic; we will enlist with the State otherwise!' This will go on, on the one hand, while the State-operation goes on, on the other: thus will all Masters of Workmen, private Captains of Industry, be forced to incessantly co-operate with the State and its public Captains: they regimenting in their way, the State in its way, with ever-widening field; till their fields meet (so to speak) and coalesce, and there be no unregimented worker, or such only as are fit to remain unregimented, any more."

The State would form its paupers into labour regiments on model conditions, with permanent maintenance. Any workman who was dissatisfied with his employer might join one of these regiments. Thus every employer would find it necessary to give the same conditions as the State. But permanence of employment discourages effort. The private employer, and his workmen, feel the constant pressure of hope and fear, the most powerful of motive-forces, which do not touch the heads of departments, and the workmen, of the State. Experience has shown that the State is unable to meet the competition of private employers.

The notion that pauper work may be used to bring pressure upon hard employers is erroneous. Complusory,

unpaid, pauper labour competes with voluntary, paid labour. Its effect must be to bring down wages. The bad employer seemed to Carlyle to be the person to be attacked, but the working man fears much more the competition of his fellows.

"Who will begin the long steep journey with us? . . . Whether Sir Robert Peel will undertake the Reform of Downing Street for us, or any Ministry or Reform farther is not known." (Peel was not then in office.) "As I read the omens, there was no man in my time more authentically called to a post of difficulty, of danger, and of honour than this man. The enterprise is ready for him, if he is ready for it. He has but to lift his finger in this enterprise, and whatsoever is wise and manful in England will rally round him."

Carlyle had been an admirer of Peel ever since that statesman had changed his mind, and manfully admitted it, with regard to the Corn Laws. "Traitor Peel" became his hero. On the 18th June, 1846, he sent Peel a copy of the second edition of his *Cromwell*, accompanied by a letter of a very complimentary kind. Peel sent a polite acknowledgment. Lady Ashburton arranged a meeting at dinner, at Bath House, on the 19th March, 1848, placing the two men together at table. After the appearance of the "Downing Street" pamphlets, with their praise of Peel, Carlyle received an invitation to a dinner party for the 15th May, 1850, of men only, at Peel's house. A few days later Carlyle and Peel met again at dinner at the Ashburtons'; and afterwards one day, in the street, a hearty hand-shake was exchanged.

In the next pamphlet, "Stump-Orator," we are told that "no British man can attain to be a Statesman, or Chief of *Workers*, till he has first proved himself a Chief of Talkers." It was otherwise "in the old ages, in those healthy times" when men were "guided by silent instincts and the monition of Nature." In the old ages which Carlyle extolled, men were forced by blows to obey their masters; the modern substitution of argument is an appeal to their intelligence.

On the 1st June appeared the pamphlet on "Parliaments." "The advent of actual open Anarchy cannot be distant. . . . The English Parliament, as windy a palavering entity as it has now grown to be, was at one time a quite solid serious actuality, met for earnest despatch of work which, on the King's part and the Commonwealth's, needed absolutely to be done. . . . The old Parliaments were authentic entities; came upon indispensable work; and were in earnest to their very finger-ends about getting it done," whereas "in modern Parliaments, indeed ever down from the Long Parliament, I note a sad gradual falling-off in this matter of 'veracity.'"

The actual business transacted in a modern Parliament is far more extensive than what was achieved by these earnest people. Carlyle thought that even "Front-de-Bœuf," whom he names, would have been gladly consulted by a wise king.

In this pamphlet occurs the best-known of Carlyle's sayings. He said "the population of the country consists of twenty-seven millions, mostly fools." The statement made a great impression, and it has never been forgotten. But we are all fools. All men do foolish things every day of their lives. Carlyle was speaking relatively, and arrogantly; he would not have done so if he had remembered the universality of human imperfection. In the same pamphlet he said, "There are fools, cowards, knaves and gluttonous traitors true only to their own appetite, in immense majority, in every rank of life." If he had put this into the first statement and had made it "the population of England consists of twenty-seven millions, mostly fools, cowards, knaves, and gluttonous traitors," the remark would not have become famous.

His view was that this "immense majority" should be prevented from exercising any influence upon the Government of the country. "This is what I always pray for. And though I know it is yet a great way off, I know also either that it is inevitably coming, or that human society, and the possibility of man's living in this earth, has ended."

When one considers the immense extension of the

franchise that has occurred in every civilised country since Carlyle wrote, he cannot be regarded as a true prophet, unless, indeed, his prophecy refers to a far distant date. But there is something to be said for his contention that the best men ought to have more actual power than the worst. Those who believe in human progress may reasonably expect that the artificial principle of equality, which is not found in nature, and is the product of vanities and jealousies, will ultimately give way to some better system, by which intelligence and knowledge will have greater influence upon the destinies of the community.

" Two grand modern facts have one of them irrevocably, and the other hopelessly for the present, altered from top to bottom the function and position of all Parliaments. Fact *first*, the existence of an Unfettered Press, with its perennial ever-increasing torrent of morning newspapers, pamphlets, books : fact, *second*, that there is now no King present in Parliament."

In Carlyle's opinion one of the merits of the Long Parliament was that it had no reporters, and did not permit any non-official person to be witness of its proceedings. Parliament should be an advisory council, with no executive power. What was wanted was a true king, a " reforming hercules."

He returned to the subject of slavery, and declared that, " Whom Heaven has made a slave, no parliament of men nor power that exists on Earth can render free. . . . Him the Supreme Power marked in the making of him, *slave* . . . to proclaim this man free is not a God's Gospel to other men ; it is an alarming Devil's Gospel to him and to us all."

Carlyle took the country yokel's view of railways. In the pamphlet, " Hudson's Statue " (Hudson was a railway magnate), he says : " Much as we love railways, there is one thing undeniable ; Railways are shifting all towns of Britain into new places ; no town will stand where it did, and nobody can tell for a long time yet where it will stand. This is an unexpected, and indeed most disastrous result. . . . Reading, Basingstoke and the rest, the unfortunate

towns subscribed money to get railways ; and it proves to be for cutting their own throats. Their business has gone elsewhither."

He complained that a prosperous Dumfries watchmaker of his acquaintance had been ruined, when the railway came to Dumfries and enabled his customers to obtain watches elsewhere—an example of the *Kleinstädterei* which Emerson said he found in Carlyle. It was this provincial spirit that prevented the railways from entering the towns ; thus even to-day the traveller may find that when he has arrived at the railway station he has not reached the town.

The day after this pamphlet was published, on the 2nd July, 1850, Sir Robert Peel died, from the effect of a fall from his horse. This event put an end to Carlyle's hope of a political career. He wrote in his diary ; " The one Statesman we had, or the least similitude of a Statesman so far as I know or can guess, is suddenly snatched away from us. What will become of it ? God knows. A *peaceable* revolt I now hardly expect for this huge wen of corruptions and diseases and miseries ; and in the meanwhile the wrigglings and strugglings in Parliament, how they now do, or what they now do there, have become mere zero to me, tedious as a tale that has been told."

The next pamphlet, on " Jesuitism," appeared on its due date, the 1st August, but there the series ended.

Of Ignatius Loyola, Carlyle says that probably he has done more mischief in the earth than any man born since his day, " for there was in him an apotheosis of falsity, a kind of subtle quintessence and deadly virus of lying, the like of which had never been seen before. . . . The Jesuit Soul has nestled itself in the life of mankind everywhere. . . . We have to report that Human Speech is not true ! That it is false to a degree never witnessed in this world till lately. Such a subtle virus of falsity in the very essence of it, as far excels all open lying, or prior kinds of falsity ; false with consciousness of being sincere ! The heart of the world is corrupted to the core."

Then he speaks of " the Fine Arts, divorced entirely

from Truth this long while, and wedded almost professedly to Falsehood." He instances the new Houses of Parliament, which he calls a " wilderness of stone pepper boxes." Gothic architecture, even Westminster Abbey, made no appeal to him. Visitors to picture galleries were hypocrites, fiction was another word for falsehood ; as for opera, " what roads the human species must have travelled before the *Psalm of David* could become an *Opera at the Haymarket*, and men, with their divine gift of Music, instead of solemnly celebrating the highest fact, or ' singing to the praise of God,' consented to celebrate the lowest nonsense, and sing to the praise of Jenny Lind and the Gazza Ladra."

So ended the *Latter-day Pamphlets*. They began with inhumanity and concluded with the narrowest Puritanism. They denounced all mankind, from Black Quashee to Jenny Lind.

That Labour politicians should find sustenance in them is surprising. Some passages which appear to have escaped them may be brought to their attention.

" I do not suppose," says Carlyle, " any reader of mine, or many persons at all, have much faith in Fraternity, Equality and the Revolutionary Millenniums preached by the French prophets in this age : but there are many movements here too which tend inevitably in the like direction ; and good men, who would stand aghast at Red Republic and its adjuncts, seem to me travelling at full speed towards that or a similar goal ! Certainly the notion everywhere prevails among us too, and preaches itself abroad in every dialect, uncontradicted anywhere so far as I can hear, that the grand panacea for social woes is what we call ' enfranchisement,' ' emancipation.' "

Then he repeats a phrase of his own, much quoted by Labour men, but which he treats now with contempt. " Fair day's wages for the fair day's work, bargained for by voluntary contract, and law of supply and demand : this is thought to be the true solution of all difficulties and injustices that have occurred between man and man."

He describes speakers on Labour or Socialist platforms.

"A foolish stump orator, perorating on his platform mere benevolences, seems a pleasant object to many persons . . . that beautiful speech of his takes captive every long ear, and kindles into quasi-sacred enthusiasm the minds of not a few: but it is quite in the teeth of the ever-lasting facts of this Universe, and will come only to mischief for every party concerned. Consider that little spouting wretch. Within the paltry skin of him, it is too probable, he holds few human virtues, beyond those essential for digesting victual: envious, cowardly, vain, a splenetic hungry soul; what heroism, in word or thought or action, will you ever get from the like of him? He, in his necessity, has taken into the benevolent line; warms the cold vacuity of his inner man to some extent, in a comfortable manner, not by silently doing some virtue of his own, but by fiercely recommending hearsay pseudo-virtues and respectable benevolences to other people. Do you call that a good trade?"

And what have Trades-Unionists to say to this, from their acclaimed champion? In a pamphlet, "Last words of Thomas Carlyle, on Trades-Unions, Promoterism and the Signs of the Times," which bears the date 12th July, 1872, and was published after his death, in 1882, Carlyle says: "The Trades-Unions of our day stand in notable contrast to the old Trades-Unions (called *Guilds*) of former centuries. *Guilds* were for quickening the conscience of workmen, teaching every workman that it was not permitted him to think of doing his work ill; that the *honour of a workman* consisted in faithful, skilful, and excellent delivery of work. . . . Trades-Unions again are avowedly for increase of wages alone; of thievery, knavery, botchery in the work done, no account is had, or, if any, rather a preference shown for these sad qualities! Guilds, therefore, we can define as tending *Heavenward*. . . . Trades-Unions as tending Hellward. . . . never was such scandal of work ill-done, and never such perpetual battle about the ever-increasing *wages* to be demanded for it!"

The present condition-of-England would have appalled Carlyle. We have now a tyranny of the majority over the

minority, of the fools over the heroes. Labour is taking the position of privilege, of freedom from taxation and from competition, which in the past has brought about the downfall of Kings and Aristocracies. This also will bring about its own doom. The history of civilisation is a record of a constant struggle, with varying fortunes, between freedom and discipline, between the individual and society. A perfect adjustment of the interests of self and of company, is seldom attained. When that occurs we have good Government.

Rc

CHAPTER XXIII

"THE LIFE OF STERLING"

THE pamphlets, which should have been an introduction to political life, were received with objurgation; even the staunchest adherents were dismayed. Carlyle professed to be indifferent to criticism but he felt that he had gone too far. In the Inaugural Address at Edinburgh, fifteen years later, he said, "I have written down some very fierce things about that, perhaps considerably more emphatic than I could now wish them to be; but they were and are deeply my conviction." The reference was clearly to the *Latter-day Pamphlets*. It was the manner more than the matter that gave offence. The ideas he had often expressed, but never in a way so "fierce," "emphatic," and, in fact, brutal and ill-natured. He was hurt now by the almost universal disapproval, and by the avoidance of his society on the part of many of his friends. "Nobody comes to the house now," said Mrs. Carlyle to Espinasse, "but a few followers of mine."[1]

In June 1849 Froude was introduced to Carlyle by James Spedding. Froude was already a disciple. He says: "I had, however, from the time when I became acquainted with his writings, looked on him as my own guide and master. . . . If I wrote anything, I fancied myself writing it to him, reflecting at each word on what he would think of it, as a check on affectations."

Of Carlyle's conversation he says: "No one could check him. If anyone tried contradiction, the cataract rose against the obstacle till it rushed over it and drowned

[1] *Literary Recollections*, Espinasse, p. 180.

it. But in general listeners sat silent; the imagery, the wild play of humour, the immense knowledge always evident in the grotesque forms which it assumed, were in themselves so dazzling and so entertaining that we lost the use of our own faculties till it was over."

Mrs. Carlyle also was difficult to stop. She had "the fatal propensity," said Mrs. Brookfield, "of telling her stories at extraordinary length. With her Scotch accent and her perseverance in finishing off every detail, those who were merely friendly acquaintances and not devotees sometimes longed for an abridgment, and perhaps also to have their turn in the conversation."[1] Mrs. Carlyle appears to have been the only person who ever interrupted Carlyle, a feat which the rest of the company present, however eminent, did not attempt. One of the silenced ones said of this redoubtable couple, "As soon as that man's tongue stops, that woman's begins."[2]

The collapse of Carlyle's hope of a political career, and the personal disfavour which the pamphlets had aroused, made him long to get away from London. He accepted gladly the invitation of Mr. Redwood, a great admirer, to Boverton, in South Wales, where he was allowed exactly what he wanted—perfect peace and rest. Never in his life was he without a friend ready to help him by every possible means. After three weeks at Boverton he went on to Scotsbrig. He was in a state of deep depression. He had thought himself destined to regenerate the world, and he found that his views were scorned and he himself shunned.

Returning from Scotland, he stayed with the Speddings at Keswick, and then with the Marshalls at Coniston. When he reached Cheyne Row his wife was at the Grange. She was distressed at her absence, but he wrote to her, "I shall know better than ever I did what the comfort to me is, of being received by you when I arrive worn out, and you welcome me with your old smiles and the light of

[1] *Mrs. Brookfield and her Circle*, II., 427.
[2] *Literary Recollections*, Espinasse, p. 205.

a human fire and a human home." He joined his wife at the Grange for ten days.

This was the year of the opening of the Crystal Palace Exhibition in Hyde Park. Carlyle hated the sight of it, partly because he disliked anything that aroused a general interest, partly because some people indulged in sentimental extravagances.

His dislike of Christmas, though understandable, is not commendable. He was one of the unfortunates who cannot enjoy what is good if others enjoy it, or make too much of it.

In the autumn of this year, on the 10th October, 1851, Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling* was published.

At the age of nineteen Sterling entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where his tutor was Julius Hare, afterwards Rector of Hurstmonceaux, Sussex, and Archdeacon of Lewes. Though a "Radical" in his Cambridge days, the influence of Hare and of Coleridge led Sterling to take orders. He went to Hurstmonceaux to assist Hare. At the end of eight months he left, partly on account of ill health. He abandoned all further thought of the Church. He found that, though he loved Christianity, he was not a true Christian. In 1835 he established himself in London. He was introduced to Carlyle by Mill, and became a much-loved friend.

Sterling's health was so precarious that he was obliged to seek mild climates—Madeira, Rome, Clifton, Falmouth, Torquay, Naples, and finally Ventnor, where he died on the 18th September, 1844, at the age of thirty-eight.

Carlyle's book was written, not merely in affectionate memory of a dear friend, but to rehabilitate himself with the public, to show that he could be tender as well as severe. He was at his best with young men who approached him as disciples. All the rancour of the *Latter-day Pamphlets* was thrown off, and he appeared as the kindly old gentleman speaking with affectionate emotion of his departed friend. The result is a beautiful biography.

By celebrating with such honour and elaboration the life of a man who had no claim to be remembered by the

world, Carlyle abandoned his contention that only the great deserve to have their lives recorded. He tells us now that " a true delineation of the smallest man, and his scene of pilgrimage through life, is capable of interesting the greatest man."

Like Irving, Sterling had fallen under the influence of Coleridge. Carlyle's portrait of Coleridge is one of his famous pieces. It would make a good description of the narrator himself with his eyes full of sorrow as of inspiration, a much-suffering man, half vanquished by physical and other bewilderment ; a copious, surprising talker, preaching earnestly the weightiest things, in a monologue which suffered no interruption, leaving the hearers swamped near to drowning, without any clear perception of what they were to believe or do ; his sermon being that the world was become materialist, with its mechanical science, deserted of God, and must change its spirit ; that the universe was eternally divine. So far that is a portrait of Carlyle ; but Coleridge tried, by using " reason " against " understanding," to reconcile Church and anti-Church, and there Carlyle would not follow him. That he called " transcendental moonshine," and he regretted that Sterling should have been influenced by it. Sterling's taking orders was a " clerical aberration," which " we ascribed to Coleridge." His resignation was a healthy recovery.

The book recalls the religious convulsions of the period. Sterling's difficulties and changes make him, as Carlyle said, " an expressive emblem of his time."

Between him and Sterling there were great differences of opinion. Like Mill, Sterling was an admirer more than a disciple. They would walk along through crowded streets, or Hyde Park, " arguing copiously, but except in opinion not disagreeing. Identity of sentiment, difference of opinion ; these are the known elements of a pleasant dialogue.

" To some of my notions he seemed to grow in stubbornness of opposition, with the growing inevitability, and never would surrender. Especially that doctrine of the

greatness and fruitfulness of Silence, remained afflictive and incomprehensible : ' Silence ? ' he would say : ' Yes, truly ; if they give you leave to proclaim silence by cannon-salvoes ! my Harpocrates-Stentor.' In like manner, ' Intellect and Virtue,' how they are proportional, or are indeed one Gift in us, the same great summary of gifts ; and again, ' Might is Right,' the identity of these two, if a man will understand this God's-Universe, and that only he who conforms to the law of it can in the long-run have any ' might ' : all this, at the first blush, often awakened Sterling's mockery upon me, and many volleys I have had to stand,—the thing not being decidable by that kind of weapon or strategy.

" In such cases your one method was to leave our friend in peace. By small-arms practice no mortal could dislodge him : but if you were in the right, the silent hours would work continually for you ; and Sterling, more certainly than any man, would and must at length swear fealty to the right, and passionately adopt it, burying all hostilities underfoot. A more candid soul, once let the stormful velocities of it expend themselves, was nowhere to be met with. A son of light, if I have ever seen one ; recognising the truth, if truth there were ; hurling overboard his vanities, petulances, big and small interests, in ready loyalty to truth ; at once a loyal child, as I said, and a gifted man ! "

With a wonderful touch Carlyle could bring back the tender grace of a day that is dead. On one occasion " in the afternoon we went on the Thames Putney-ward together, we two with my Wife ; under the sunny skies, on the quiet water, and with copious cheery talk, the remembrance of which is still present enough to me."

The *Life of John Sterling* is a work of love and sweetness. One envies the two men, that they knew each other ; and the father, Edward Sterling, for being of that company, and for earning the fine portrait drawn of him, also, by the artist of genius.

A few weeks before his death, Sterling wrote to Carlyle

a letter, printed in the *Life*, where it is spoken of as "forever memorable to the receiver of it."

"Hillside, Ventnor,
"10*th August*, 1844.

"MY DEAR CARLYLE,

"For the first time for many months it seems possible to send you a few words; merely, however, for Remembrance and Farewell. On higher matters there is nothing to say. I tread the common road into the great darkness without any thought of fear, and with very much of hope. Certainty indeed I have none. With regard to You and Me I cannot begin to write; having nothing for it but to keep shut the lid of those secrets with all the iron weights that are in my power. Towards me it is still more true than towards England that no man has been and done like you. Heaven bless you! If I can lend a hand when THERE, that will not be wanting. It is all very strange, but not one hundredth part so sad as it seems to standers-by.

"Your wife knows my mind towards her, and will believe it without asseverations. Yours to the last,

"JOHN STERLING."

CHAPTER XXIV

AT WORK ON "FREDERICK THE GREAT"

AFTER the book on Cromwell, published in 1845, all that Carlyle wrote in the next six years consisted of *Latter-day Pamphlets*, a couple of magazine articles, with some incursions into the *Examiner* and *Spectator*, and the short *Life of Sterling*. He felt that he had been idle too long. He was still, in 1851, only fifty-five years of age; he was full of energy, with none of his faculties impaired in the slightest degree. He looked round for a subject worthy of his reputation. He thought of Luther, but decided finally upon Frederick the Great.

Hitherto Carlyle had never praised any king born heir to that exalted station. His heroes—Mahomet, Cromwell, Napoleon, Francia—had made themselves kings. That he chose a born king now was in part due to the great change that had come over his own social position. He and his wife lived now much among the aristocracy.

Believing that he was "meant to be a Duke," he wrote, in 1845, an article, which was published in the Journal of the British Archæological Association, Vol. IX., under the heading "Short Notices as to the Early History of the Family of Carlyle, which the Conqueror found in England, and a branch of which was ennobled in Scotland." He adopted the crest of the Barons Carlile for his book-mark.

It has been suggested that at this time he hoped to be appointed tutor to the Prince of Wales (Edward VII). In November 1854 he went to Windsor to examine documents concerning Frederick the Great, and had some conversation with Prince Albert. Then he wrote an article, which appeared in the *Westminster Review* in the following January, entitled "The Prinzenraub: A Glimpse of

Saxon History." It was a story of Prince Albert's ancestors, of no general interest, written to please the Prince. It contains a reference to " the young gentleman " (the Prince of Wales) " who will one day (it is hoped, but not till many years) be King of England." In the second volume of *Frederick*, published in September 1858, we find this passage : " That Franz Josias " (of Coburg) " has an Eldest son, (boy of six when Friedrich Wilhelm makes his visit),—A GRANDSON'S GRANDSON of whom is, at this day, Prince of Wales among the English people, and to me a subject of intense reflection now and then ! "

The revolutions of 1848 had made Carlyle more than ever convinced that the world of civilisation was on the brink of ruin, and that the only remedy was the dictatorship of a Hero. He had pleaded for such a Government over and over again, but his words had passed unheeded. He proposed to prove by a German example that history supported his views. A considerable amount of material was available, and no full-dress biography of Frederick the Great—for Preuss's volumes are little more than a collection of data—had yet appeared in any language.

Carlyle's descriptions of the battles of Dunbar and Worcester had been received with much eulogy, and he hoped to enhance his reputation by his handling of Frederick's exploits.

In the autumn of 1851 he set to work, reading, he said, " about Frederick and his battles." After a year of steady application to his subject he embarked at Leith for a German tour. For the first time in his life he was to see the Germany he had praised so much. He applied to a German acquaintance, Herr Neuberg, asking him for assistance in his travels. Neuberg met him at Bonn, and took charge of him throughout the tour.

He was disappointed with Germany. The visit to Weimar was disastrous. The houses of Schiller and Goethe had nothing distinguished or romantic about them. He went to Berlin, and could find no merit in anybody there, with the single exception of Tieck.

And here is what Tieck thought of Carlyle, recorded by

Varnhagen von Ense, January 1854: "Tieck told me that when Carlyle visited him at Berlin, he was extremely astonished and struck by him. His look was wretched in spite of his red cheeks, his dress was extremely neglected, his manner boorish. And it had been plain that this had not become so unconsciously but on the contrary that he rather piqued himself on it. Early in the conversation Tieck spoke of Coleridge; Carlyle broke out into an unrestrained laugh, a laugh which was recognisably forced and altogether insulting. Tieck asked, in cold seriousness, 'What are you laughing at?' Whereupon Carlyle suddenly restrained himself, and with earnest tone and manner said, 'Oh, No!' he knew well that there was much that was serious to be said about Coleridge. That made all the more valid the question, 'Why did he laugh?' But no answer was given. Foolish frivolity! As for his complaints about his travelling and the hotels, that he could find no quiet room here, no curtained bed, that we had no books about Frederick the Great of the kind he desired, and that in spite of the very object of his journey he would neither see nor hear anything with regard to his crazy view of the significance of the great King—Tieck shrugged his shoulders in a sympathetic manner, and declared it would be better that Carlyle should not write about him."[1]

This is an instructive commentary on the snobbish adulation to which by this time Carlyle had become accustomed in England. There he was regarded as a being of different clay from ordinary men; it was a sign of culture and of fashion to worship him. Few Englishmen would have ventured to accuse Carlyle of an affected boorishness, of foolish frivolity, of crazy views.

Germany proved to be very different from what Carlyle had imagined. As for Frederick himself, Carlyle told his brother John that he did not care much for him, and that he dreaded the labour before him.

The German books which a writer about Frederick must read are indeed heavy. They have, as a rule, no index,

[1] *Last Words of Thomas Carlyle*, p. 287.

and few chapter headings. If the student desires to ascertain what Koser, or any other German, has to say on any point, he will have to turn over a great many pages before he is able to discover the area of surface he is in search of; and then he will find that he has to interpret the facts there related as best he can. The indigestible mass is not aerated by ideas emanating from the author; the reader has to supply them himself.

Every student has the right to complain of the unnecessary labour the perusal of such works entails, but as was his wont, Carlyle exaggerated, with the result that he has obtained credit for greater toil than he really went through. If we exclude the preliminary reading of more than a year, and let Carlyle have that all to the good, the writing period was twelve years. The first edition, in six volumes, contains 4,039 pages, written in 4,380 days—a rate of less than a page per day. In a condensed book, packed with facts, such an amount might entail a full day's work; but Carlyle's six volumes are garrulous and diffuse.

Instead of complaining of his labour, he might have reduced it by at least one half, by abstaining from running to earth, and weariness, matters which have no visible connection with Frederick the Great.

In the summer of 1853 a sound-proof room was erected on the top of the house at Cheyne Row. There Carlyle could work in comparative quiet. At night he was disturbed by " demon fowls " next door, but Mrs. Carlyle induced the neighbours to get rid of them, by the threat that, if necessary, she would take a lease of the house and turn out the tenant as well as the fowls.

In December 1853 word came that old Mrs. Carlyle was dying. On the 23rd December, Carlyle reached Scotsbrig, just in time to be recognised and spoken to. On the 25th his mother died. The bond between Carlyle and his mother had been specially close, even for that tender relationship. In the last letter that he wrote to her he said, " If there has been any good in the things I have uttered in the world's hearing, it was *your* voice essentially that was speaking through me; essentially what you and

my brave father meant and taught me to mean, this was the purport of all I spoke and wrote." Perhaps Carlyle did not quite realise how true this was, that all his teaching came straight from the Ecclefechan cottage and chapel.

He was no longer poor. When, on the 12th February, 1855, his wife left on his table the *Budget of the " Femme Incomprise,"* in which she showed that her allowance for housekeeping was insufficient, he agreed without demur to supply the £58 quarterly which was demanded. He said he read the clever, mocking spirit of the piece " with great laughter," but there were complaints in it of a serious nature, which were no laughing matter ; he was too much at ease in Zion.

This year Miss Jewsbury came to live in London. Mrs. Carlyle wrote to Mrs. Russell, " I am hoping for a considerable acquisition before long : Miss Jewsbury, the authoress of *The Half-Sisters*, etc., the most intimate friend I have in the world, and who has lived generally at Manchester since we first knew each other, has decided to come and live near me for good. . . . It will be a real gain to have a woman I like, so near as the street in which I have decided on an apartment for her."

In October Mrs. Carlyle began to write a diary. When, years later, Carlyle read what his wife had written about his conduct towards her, he was horrified and struck with remorse, for he knew that there had been ground for her accusations.

The second entry, 22nd October, begins : " I was cut short in my introduction " (her reason for writing) " last night by Mr. C.'s return from Bath House. That eternal Bath House. I wonder how many thousand miles Mr. C. has walked between there and here, putting it altogether ; setting up always another milestone and another betwixt himself and me. Oh, good gracious ! when I first noticed that heavy yellow house without knowing, or caring to know, who it belonged to, how far I was from dreaming that through years and years I should carry every stone's weight of it on my heart. . . . October 23. A stormy

day within doors, so I walked out early, and walked, walked, walked. If peace and quietness be not in one's power, one can always give oneself at least bodily fatigue. . . . November 1st. Fine weather outside in fact, but indoors blowing a devil of a gale. Off into space then, to get the green mould that has been gathering upon me of late days brushed off by human contact. November 5. Alone this evening. Lady A. in town again ; and Mr. C. of course at Bath House.

" When I think of what I is
And what I used to was,
I gin to think I've sold myself
For very little cas."

Mrs. Carlyle was in poor health and low spirits ; she was in a nervous condition. It is, however, clear, not only from this diary, that she had real cause of complaint against her husband ; she writes of " unjust treatment, harshness, and disdain "—sad words, rather too strong, but which were not without some justification, as Carlyle realised, to his sorrow, when he could no longer make amends.

Here is a less tragic entry in the diary, about Mrs. Carlyle's little dog, Nero. " March 27th. Mr. C. took Nero out with him tonight, and half an hour after he opened the door with his latch-key and called in, ' Is that vermin come back ? ' Having received my horrified ' No ' he hurried off again, and for twenty minutes I was in the agonies of one's dog lost, my heart beating up into my ears. At last I heard Mr. C.'s feet in the street ; and, oh joy ! heard him gollaring at something, and one knew what the little bad something was. Ach ! we could have better spared a better dog."

Carlyle was very fond of the dog, and when it had to be put away, in February 1860, he " cried like a child," reports Gilchrist. " He told his wife he could not rebuke her, he felt so wretched himself."[1] He declared that his heart was " unexpectedly and distractedly torn to pieces." Mrs. Carlyle felt the loss severely. " Nobody but myself

[1] *Anne Gilchrist*, by H. H. Gilchrist, 1887, p. 84.

can have any idea what that little creature has been in my life. My inseparable companion during eleven years, ever doing his little best to keep me from feeling sad and lonely. Docile, affectionate, loyal up to his last hour. When weak and full of pain, he offered himself to go out with me, seeing my bonnet on ; and came panting to welcome me on my return."

On the 4th May, 1857, Lady Ashburton died. " I have indeed lost such a friend as I never had," wrote Carlyle to his brother John, " nor am again in the least likelihood to have, in this *stranger* world ; a magnanimous and beautiful soul which had furnished the English earth and made it homelike to me in many ways is not now here. Not since our mother's death has there been to me anything resembling it. . . . The one genuine friend I had acquired in these parts, whose nobleness was more precious than I knew ; a loss not in any measure to be repaired in the world henceforth."

" Jane is decidedly better," wrote Carlyle, five weeks after the death of Lady Ashburton. Mrs. Carlyle went to stay with her friends, the Misses Donaldson, at Sunny Bank, Haddington. " I never saw the country about here look so lovely," she wrote to her husband, " but I viewed it all with a calm about as morbid as was my excitement last year."

In December 1858 occurred an event which ultimately brought great good to the Carlyles. Lord Ashburton married again, the bride on this occasion being Miss Stuart Mackenzie, who became, says Froude, " the guardian genius of the Cheyne Row household ; to Mrs. Carlyle the tenderest of sisters, to Carlyle, especially after his own bereavement, sister, daughter, mother, all that can be conveyed in the names of the human ties."

An entry in his diary in the summer of this year illustrates Carlyle's attitude towards nature : " Sunday I started broad awake at 3 a.m., went downstairs, out, smoked a cigar on a stool ; have not seen so lovely, sad, and grand a summer weather scene for twenty years back. Trees stood as if cast in bronze, not an aspen leaf stirring ;

sky was a silver mirror, getting yellowish to the north-east ; and only one big star, star of the morning, visible in the increasing light. This is a very grand place, this world, too. It did me no ill. Enough ! "

This passage helps us to understand a part of Carlyle's mind when he denounced view-hunting, and called for silence. We should approach nature with reverence and humility, and beware of affectation and the intrusion of self. When writing of nature one should, if possible, keep one's own personality out. If that cannot be done it were better to be silent.

And yet Carlyle's own jealous self made him sometimes cold to nature. One evening, at the Grange, a party of men who had been out in the grounds, and had seen a magnificent meteor, spoke of it with enthusiasm. Carlyle's comment was, " Aye, some sulphuretted hydrogen, I suppose, or some rubbish of that kind." On another occasion, when his attention was drawn to the beauty of the stars, he said they were " a sad sicht." This was not mere contradiction for its own sake. He said to Allingham, " It seems the stars are racing along at an inexpressible rate of speed. But I care next to nothing about it ; let them race as they will. There are much grander and more important subjects for contemplation."[1] Allingham speaks of Carlyle's " insensibility to the beauty of flowers." " The blossoms are coming out," he remarked to Carlyle one spring day. Without looking at them, Carlyle said, " Ah, yes, poor things."[2]

Carlyle felt a kind of grudge at nature, which had been created by the same God that had created him, and was, therefore, a rival. The existence of stars and flowers was not entirely pleasing, for they transgressed upon his self and its egotistic consciousness.

The remark about sulphuretted hydrogen was precisely in the manner which he attributed to men of science, whom he accused of depriving objects of their wonder and mystery by giving them scientific names.

In a better vein was his repetition of the saying of Kant,

[1] William Allingham, *A Diary*, p. 215. [2] Ibid., pp. 204, 231.

" Two things strike me dumb—the Starry Heavens and the Sense of Right and Wrong in man."

In January 1860 the Carlyles were welcomed at the Grange by the new Lady Ashburton. In August, Carlyle went by steamer to Thurso Castle, near John o' Groats, on a visit to Sir George Sinclair. Mrs. Carlyle visited Lady Stanley at Alderley Park, Cheshire.

Froude came to live in London this year. He became very intimate with the Carlyles, calling at Cheyne Row frequently.

One evening, 30th September, 1863, Mrs. Carlyle, returning from a visit to a cousin in the post office at St. Martins-le-Grand, was about to step off the pavement to enter an omnibus at the corner of Cheapside when a cab came up unexpectedly. Stopping herself suddenly, she fell on her left side ; the muscles and sinews of the thigh were seriously torn, and the arm and shoulder hurt. She could not raise herself, was lifted by a policeman and assistants into a cab, and rode home in agony. She made the cab stop at No. 6 Cheyne Row to ask the assistance of a neighbour and friend, Mr. Larkin, before revealing her condition to her husband. The two men had to help her from the cab into a chair and carry her into the house, and up the stairs to her room. A long and terrible illness ensued. In a few weeks the leg was nearly well, but the excruciating pains in arm and shoulder continued, destroying sleep and wearing out the whole system.

At first Carlyle did not realise how serious was the calamity. He told his wife she ought to be thankful that the accident had been no worse—a remark which seemed to her to savour of cant. She replied that she was not thankful, and would not say that she was. He thought she would soon be well. She was able to receive the Froudes in the drawing-room on 30th November, 1863. Carlyle says, " Froude and his wife, the pleasantest, indeed almost the only pleasant evening company we now used to have ; intelligent, cheerful, kindly, courteous, sincere (they had come to live near us, and we hoped for a larger share of such evenings, of which probably this was

the first? Alas, to me, too surely it was in effect the last)."

Next day the illness took an even more serious turn and Carlyle no longer under-estimated it. " Poor Jane's state is such as to fill us with the saddest thoughts," he wrote. She slept little, and was prostrate with weakness and depression. In March she went to St. Leonards to stay with Dr. and Mrs, Blakiston, the doctor's wife being no other person than the Bessy Barnet who had been the first servant at Cheyne Row. She had risen from maid-of-all-work to hostess, and now loved her guest as much as she had loved her mistress.

In March of this year occurred the death of Lord Ashburton. He had been for twenty years a very close friend, and Carlyle was much affected by his loss. He left Carlyle the sum of £2,000. " Money can do nothing for us now," wrote Mrs. Carlyle; but the death of Lord Ashburton had one good result for her that it made her more valuable than ever to her husband.

Her condition became so grave, sleep in particular being almost entirely denied her, that she began to fear that she would die, and the terrible thought assailed Carlyle also. She felt that a complete change of scene and companionship was essential. In September 1864 she began the long journey to Scotland, leaving her husband behind. Escorted by her brother-in-law, John, she went to London, stayed the night at Forster's house in Palace Gate, and next day went north, with John, to the Austins at the Gill, Annan. Thence she went to the Russells, at Holm Hill, Thornhill, and there decided improvement was made, with satisfactory increase in weight. On the 1st October, escorted again by the faithful John, Mrs. Carlyle returned to Cheyne Row, where she was welcomed with joy, as one risen from the grave.

The heartiness of her reception, the discovery that many people, besides her husband, loved her, did much for her health. She described her arrival at Cheyne Row in a letter to Mrs. Russell, 3rd October, 1864: " Mr. C. rushed out in his dressing-gown and kissed me, and wept over me

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as I was in the act of getting down out of the cab (much to the edification of the neighbours at their windows, I have no doubt); and then the maids appeared behind him, looking timidly, with flushed faces and tears in their eyes; and the little one (the cook) threw her arms round my neck and fell to kissing me in the open street; and the big one (the housemaid) I had to kiss, that she might not be made jealous the first thing! They were all astonished at the improvement in my appearance."

This was nothing compared to the kissings from men. George Cooke called. " The last man on earth," wrote Mrs. Carlyle to Mrs. Russell, " one would have expected to make one ' a scene.' But lo! what happened? I stood up to welcome him, and he took me in his arms, and kissed me two or three times, and then he sank into a chair and—burst into tears! and sobbed and cried for a minute or two like any school-boy. Mercifully I was not infected by his agitation; but it was I who spoke calmly, and brought him out of it! . . . Nobody could have predicted sentiment out of Lord Houghton! but, good gracious! it was the same thing again. He clasped me in his arms, and kissed me, and dropped in a chair—not crying, but quite pale, and gasping, without being able to say a word."

Forster kissed her when he called. Woolner, the sculptor, did so several times, his face wet with tears. " It is impossible to tell," she wrote, " who is kindest to me; my fear is always that I shall be stifled with roses. They make so much of me, and I am so weak. The Countess of Airlie was kneeling beside my sofa yesterday embracing my feet and kissing my hands! A German girl " (Reichenbach's daughter, probably) " said the other day, ' I think, Mrs. Carlyle, a many many peoples love you very dear! ' It is true, and what I have done to deserve all that love I haven't the remotest conception. . . . I cannot tell you," she concludes, " how gentle and good Mr. Carlyle is! He is busy as ever, but he studies my comfort and peace as he never did before."

He gave her a brougham, in which she drove out every

day. Life was pleasanter now, and her health was much improved. " A tumbler of warm milk from the cow, and all frothed up, just as at the Gill and at Holm Hill," came every morning from the Rectory, near by; and Lady Ashburton sent, besides a present of two dozen of champagne, a hamper from Addiscombe Farm three times a week, containing new-laid eggs, butter, and cream.

To crown all, on the 5th January, 1865, Carlyle finished, and posted, the last leaf of *The Life of Frederick the Great.*

CHAPTER XXV

"THE LIFE OF FREDERICK THE GREAT"

1. *Might is Right*

THE first two volumes of the biography of Frederick the Great were published in 1858; four other volumes followed, the last of them in March 1865. The six volumes would be reduced to three, perhaps two, if all that is garrulous and irrelevant were excised. The writer meanders along innumerable by-paths.

The two things which interested him most were, battles, and gossip about notable persons. Carlyle was so fond of battles that, in addition to his elaborate descriptions of Frederick's battles, he gives lengthy accounts of Dettingen, of Fontenoy, and of others with which Frederick had no direct concern. But the greater part of the work is devoted to the personality, and the worldly fortune, the anecdotage, of princes and princesses, their ministers and attendants, with an occasional digression to some person of fame, such as Voltaire. Carlyle's book is a *Who's Who* of the celebrities of Frederick's era, and an *Almanach de Gotha* of the reigning families of Europe. What happened to the peoples whose destinies were entrusted to these royalties, is ignored, except in so far as the career of a prince or princess may have become involved. He had travelled far from Craigenputtock. He no longer talked of the scholars and writers of Germany, of Schiller and Goethe, Richter and Novalis, with their deep cogitations on the mysteries of life. That Germany, which Carlyle helped us to admire, seems to have passed out of his recollection. He had forgotten Fichte's Divine Idea, in order to dwell upon Fichte's Inspired Despot.

The Hohenzollerns appealed to Carlyle because "they were not, any of them, paragons of virtue. They did not walk in altogether speckless sunday pumps, or much clear-starched into consciousness of the moral sublime; but in rugged practical boots, and by such roads as there were." The sentence occurs early in the book and is characteristic of the tone throughout.

"Shortly after which, Friedrich Wilhelm" (the Great Elector) "who had shone much in the Battle, changed sides. An inconsistent, treacherous man? Perhaps not, O reader: perhaps a man advancing 'in circuits,' the only way he has; spirally, face now to east, now to west, with his own reasonable private aim sun-clear to him all the while? His success, if we look where he started and where he ended, was beyond that of any other man in his day."

On the 1st April, 1686, the Great Elector made a treaty with Austria. In return for an annual subsidy, the cancellation of debts, and the small territory of Schwiebus, he "renounces in perpetuity, for himself, his heirs and successors, in *genere* and in *specie*, all pretensions that have been or may be made to the Duchies of Jägerndorf, Liegnitz, Brieg and Wohlau" (in Silesia).

Unknown to him, his eldest son Frederick had already, on the 10th March, signed a document by which he promised to return Schwiebus to Austria on his accession, receiving in return immediate financial assistance and a promise of the Emperor's good offices in cancelling the Great Elector's testamentary dispositions in favour of his sons by his second wife. Under the influence of this wife the Great Elector had kept his eldest son short of money, and had been induced to make provisions to prevent him from succeeding to the whole of the Electoral estates.

The father gave up the Silesian claim for money and Schwiebus. The son gave up Schwiebus for money and a full inheritance.

On the death of the Great Elector, the Emperor, in accordance with his promise, quashed the testamentary dispositions in favour of the sons by the second wife, thus

giving the complete succession to Frederick, the eldest son, now the Elector. But when the Emperor demanded that Frederick should carry out his part of the bargain and return Schwiebus, he encountered an obstinate resistance, which was kept up for six years. Under insistent Austrian pressure, Frederick at last gave up Schwiebus, on receiving payment of £25,000 which he alleged had been expended on the property, for improvements.

Carlyle describes the agreement to return Schwiebus as a " plan actually not unlike that of swindling money-lenders to a young gentleman in difficulties, and of manageable turn, who has got into their hands. The Great Elector died two years after ; Schwiebus then in his hand. The new Elector, once instructed as to the nature of the affair, refused to give up Schwiebus : declared the transaction a swindle."

From this one would suppose that when he signed the document, as Electoral Prince, Frederick was too young to be able to understand such things, that he was still in the nursery. But his age was twenty-eight ; he was already a father, and married to his second wife.

" The poor cheated Elector had, at last, to give up Schwiebus, in terms of his promise. He took act that it had been a surreptitious transaction, palmed upon him while ignorant and while without the least authority or power to make such a promise : that he was not bound by it, nor would be, except on compulsion thus far : and as to binding Brandenburg by it, how could he, at that period of his history, bind Brandenburg ? Brandenburg was not then his to bind, any more than China was."

One cannot admire Carlyle for his approval of Frederick's repudiation of the transaction, on the ground that it was " surreptitious," for the concealment was devised by Frederick himself. It was not the son, but the father, who was " ignorant." At the age of twenty-eight a man does not engage by solemn deed to return a property which has never been in his family, and is not yet his, without making enquiries.

An heir to an estate, says Carlyle, is entitled to repudiate

any contract he may make, for valuable consideration, with regard to the estate ; to retain the profit and decline to pay the agreed price. The Electoral Prince could not bind Brandenburg. It would seem that he had no personal honour to bind.

This Frederick's son, Frederick William I, hanged, without trial, a man whom he suspected of fraud, who was afterwards found to have been innocent. " Very rhadamanthine indeed," says Carlyle. " The soft quality of mercy,—ah, yes, it is beautiful and blessed, when permissible (though thrice-accursed, when not) : but it is on the hard quality of justice first of all, that Empires are built up, and beneficent and lasting things become achieved to mankind, in this world ! " It is pitiful to find Carlyle taking refuge in talk about the necessity for justice, by way of explaining away a case of brutal injustice.

The successor of Frederick William I was his eldest son, Frederick the Great. One of Frederick's first acts as king was to abolish torture, except in cases of conspiracy, *lèse-majesté*, and high-treason. Carlyle does not mention the rather significant exceptions. His comment is, " Friedrich's Cabinet Order, we need not say, was greeted everywhere, at home and abroad, by three rounds of applause ;—in which surely all of us still join ; though the per-contra also is becoming visible to some of us, and our enthusiasm grows less complete than formerly." Already, in the *Latter-day Pamphlets*, Carlyle had expressed his regret at the abolition of the treadwheel.

Frederick made a show of granting freedom of the press, though there never was any approach to real freedom. " Freedom of the press," says Carlyle, " is a noble thing ; and in certain Nations, at certain epochs, produces glorious effects,—chiefly in the revolutionary line, where that has grown indispensable . . . in Nations not in an exceptional case, it becomes impossible amazingly soon." He taught that freedom of the press might be permitted in order to produce a Revolution, but not at any other time, or for any other purpose.

As for Parliaments and Public Opinion Carlyle repeated

once more his well-known dislike of them. Of Brandenburg under Frederick, he says, " There is no freedom in that country . . . Friedrich is not the man to awaken Parliamentary sleeping-dogs well settled by his Ancestors." The Government was a tyranny, to Carlyle's satisfaction. He has nothing but contempt for " that loose and empty tornado of vociferation which men call Public Opinion."

" *Ach, mein lieber Sulzer*," said Frederick the Great to a schoolmaster who had expressed sanguine hopes of mankind, " *er Kennt nicht diese verdammte race* " (you do not know that damned race). The sentiment was quoted with approval by Carlyle. He also thought men a damned race, who require to be kept in order by a Prussian drill-sergeant. A Despotism upheld by a large Army, under the command of a King, was his ideal State. He desired such a Government for England.

The Emperor Charles VI, having no son, desired to secure the succession of his daughter, Maria Theresa, to all his Dominions. He succeeded in obtaining treaty guarantees, for valuable consideration in every case, from most of the European States, in support of the Pragmatic Sanction, the law of inheritance in favour of Maria Theresa.

Carlyle says many times that treaties are so many shadows, and that Charles VI was a shadow hunter. " Most of the Foreign Potentates idly accept the thing,—as things of a distant contingent kind are accepted ;—made Treaty on it, since the Kaiser seemed so extremely anxious. . . . Bright little Prince Eugéne was wont to tell his Majesty : ' Treatying, your Majesty ? A well-trained Army and a full Treasury ; that is the only Treaty that will make this Pragmatic Sanction valid ! ' But his Majesty never would believe."

One of Carlyle's chapters is headed, " A Kaiser hunting Shadows." " This was another vast Shadow, or confused high-piled continent of shadows, to which our poor Kaiser held with his customary tenacity. To procure adherences and assurances to this dear Pragmatic Sanction." And again : " Shadow Hunt is now gone all to Pragmatic Sanction, as it were ; that now is the one thing left in

Nature for a Kaiser: and that he will love, and chase, as the summary of all things."

The treaties of Guarantee which the Kaiser obtained were described by Carlyle as "diplomatic packthread"; and the Pragmatic Sanction itself was an "Imperial bit of Sheepskin."

Prussia and England were among the guarantors of the succession of Maria Theresa. When the Emperor died, in the autumn of 1740, Frederick the Great sent Maria Theresa a letter promising his support, while he prepared, in all secrecy, to attack her in Silesia. Then he marched suddenly into that province, and succeeded in holding it against the Austrian army sent to eject him.

England stood by her bond, as, in similar circumstances, she did in 1914. It appeared to Englishmen that Frederick's conduct had been dishonourable. "Let me request all readers," says Carlyle, "to blow that sorry chaff entirely out of their minds. . . . George II, seeing good to plunge head-foremost into German Politics, and to take Maria Theresa's side in the Austrian Succession War of 1740–48, needed to begin by assuring his Parliament and Newspapers, profoundly dark on the matter, that Friedrich was a robber and villain for taking the other side." The policeman and the thief struggling together are apparently taking sides.

George II, says Carlyle, was "A man of some worth too; 'scrupulously kept his word,' say the witnesses: a man always conscious to himself, 'Am not I a man of honour, then?' to a punctilious degree. . . . little George, who considers Pragmatic Sanction as the Keystone of Nature in a manner . . . on George's part it was pure adoration of pragmatic Sanction, anxiety for the Keystone of Nature, and lest Chaos came again." The English army, sent to the Continent to support Maria Theresa, is spoken of by Carlyle as "little George's Pragmatic Army." One of his chapters has the heading "Britannic Majesty as Paladin of the Pragmatic."

Frederick's treacherous assault received Carlyle's hearty approval. "Be immediate about it, then; the time is

now, or else never ! No fair judge can blame the young man that he laid hold of the flaming Opportunity in this manner."

Frederick paid little attention to the question of rights. Carlyle makes him say : " Just rights ? What are rights, never so just, which you cannot make valid ? The world is full of such. If you have rights and can assert them into facts, do it ; that is worth doing ! "

On the subject of the rights themselves, Carlyle was more Prussian than the Prussians. Frederick's foreign secretary, Podewils, reported to his master : " On the question of right, I am obliged to say with profound respect to Your Majesty that there exist solemn treaties which the House of Austria will bring forward, by which the House of Brandenburg has let itself be induced, although fraudulently, to renounce these considerable pretensions in exchange for trifles."[1] Koser, the chief German biographer, says : " That the letter of the treaties, that the strict right was not on his side, Frederick and his advisers knew well."[2] There are no similar admissions by Carlyle.

He quoted a passage from a despatch sent to London by Guy Dickens, the British Minister at Berlin. " ' A Prince who had the least regard for honour, truth and justice, could not act the part he is going to do.' Alas, no Excellency Dickens ! ' But it is plain his only view was, to deceive us all, and conceal for a while his ambitious and mischievous designs.' ' Never was such dissimulation ! ' exclaims the Diplomatic world everywhere, being angered at it, as if it were a vice on the part of a King about to invade Silesia. Dissimulation, if that mean mendacity is not the name of the thing ; it is the art of wearing a polite cloak of darkness, and the King is little disturbed what name they call it."

The diplomatists of that day, including those who had no active interest in the affair, agreed with the British representative at Berlin, also a neutral, that Frederick's conduct was incompatible with honour, truth and justice,

[1] *Politische Correspondenz Friedrich's des Grossen*, I., 91.
[2] *Preussische Staatschriften*, Vol. I., p. 57.

according to the standard of the time. Poor innocents! How else could Frederick have captured Silesia?

"We will here advise our readers to prepare for dismissing altogether that notion of Friedrich's duplicity, mendacity, finesse and the like, which was once widely current in the world. . . . A veracious man he was, at all points; not even conscious of his veracity; but had it in the blood of him; and never looked upon 'mendacity' but from a very great height indeed. He does not, except where suitable, at least he never should, express his whole meaning; but you will never find him expressing what is not his meaning. Reticence, not dissimulation."

In the same spirit Carlyle approved Frederick's cool assertion that he was marching into Silesia, "rather out of friendly views towards Austria (much business lying between us about Schlesien), not out of hostile views by any means, as all Excellencies shall assure their respective Courts." The friendly business was the capture of Silesia. In the next paragraph Carlyle reports Frederick's announcement to the French Ambassador, "I believe I am going to play your game; if the aces fall to me, we will share." But how could any aces fall to him if he had no hostile views towards Austria?

"Nay, we are to admit that the new place for Silesia was, likewise, the place appointed it by just Heaven; and Friedrich's too was a necessary war. Heaven makes use of Shadow-hunting Kaisers too; and its ways in this mad world are through the great deep . . . If instead of Pragmatic Sanction with eleven Potentates guaranteeing, Maria Theresa had at this time had 200,000 soldiers and a full treasury (as Prince Eugéne used to advise the late Kaiser); how different might it have been with her!" The foolish Kaiser had believed in treaties, whereas force is the only valid thing.

Frederick the Great obtained control of Breslau, without contest, by promising to respect the neutrality of the city, and by giving a guarantee that his troops would remain outside the walls. Breaking his word, he introduced troops and stores into that part of the town on the right

bank of the river Oder, known as the Dom Insel, or Cathedral Island. Carlyle approved the perfidious action, on the ground that necessity knows no law. The Dom Island is " definable (in a case of such necessity) as being ' outside the walls.' . . . The Prussian brigade now quartering there . . . who can object—in a case of necessity? " Later, by a trick, Frederick introduced his troops into the centre of the town. The Breslau authorities allowed Prussian troops to pass through the town, in sections. Carlyle explains with gusto how they were cheated. " One quotity of companies you admit; then close and bolt, till it have marched across and out at the opposite Gate; after which open again for a second lot. But in this case—owing to accident (very unusual) of a baggage-wagon breaking down, and people hurrying to help it forward—the whole regiment gets in, escorted as usual by the Town-guard. Whole regiment; and marches, not straight through; but at a certain corner, strikes off leftward to the Market-place; where, singular to say, it seems inclined to pause and rearrange itself a little. Nay, more singular still, other regiments (owing to like accidents) from other Gates join it;—and—in fact— . . . Breslau City becomes Friedrich's softly like a movement during drill. Not the least mistake occurred," adds Carlyle admiringly.

Here is another example of Carlyle's attitude towards treaties. " June 5th, 1741, Friedrich, spurring Podewils to the utmost speed, and ' ordering secrecy on pain of death,' signs his Treaty with France! A kind of provisional off-and-on Treaty, I take it to be. . . . Undoubtedly this of June 5th is the most important Treaty in the Austrian-Succession War, and the cardinal element of Friedrich's procedure in that Adventure. . . . A very fast-and-loose Treaty, to all appearance! "

If the treaty was not binding how could it have been " most important "? Carlyle is trying to argue that the treaty was important against France but not against Prussia, and is thus preparing for Frederick's treacherous breaking of the treaty.

With the same object he omits a passage from a letter,

dated 14th September, 1741, written by Frederick to Lord Hyndford, the British Ambassador. He gives the beginning and the end of the letter, and omits the central portion, in which Frederick says, " my engagements with the very Christian King and the Elector of Bavaria are so solemn, so indissoluble, and so inviolable, that I shall not abandon those faithful allies," etc. This description by Frederick himself, of his obligations under the treaty of 5th June, 1741, did not seem to Carlyle to be worthy of notice.

The letter to Lord Hyndford was written with the object of deceiving France and Bavaria, the allies of Prussia, for Frederick was at the time negotiating with Lord Hyndford an act of treachery towards them. On the 9th October he entered into a secret treaty with the common enemy, Austria.

" It must be owned," says Carlyle, in a later passage, " these Friedrich-Hyndford Negotiations, following on an express " (fast-and-loose ?) " French-Prussian Treaty of June 5th, which have to proceed in such three-fold mystery now and afterwards, are of questionable distressing nature ; nor can the fact that they are escorted copiously enough by a correspondent sort on the French side, and indeed on the Austrian and on all sides, be a complete consolation—far otherwise, to the ingenuous reader. Smelfungus indignantly calls it an immorality and a dishonour, ' a playing with loaded dice ' ; which in good part it surely was. Nor can even Friedrich, who has many pleas for himself, obtain spoken acquittal ; unspoken, accompanied with regrets and pity, is all even Friedrich can aspire to."

In the next sentence Carlyle embarks upon the " spoken acquittal " which he has just said that Frederick cannot aspire to. " My own impression is, Smelfungus, if candid, would on clearer information and consideration have revoked much of what he says here in censure of Friedrich. At all events, if asked : Where is the specifical not ' superstitious ' *want* of ' veracity ' you ever found in Friedrich ? and How, *otherwise* than even as Friedrich did, would you, most veracious Smelfungus, have plucked out your Silesia

from such an Element and such a Time?—He would be puzzled to answer. I give his Fragment as I find it, with these deductions."

He puts forward Smelfungus to say, " Friedrich knows that the French are false to him ; he by no means intends to be romantically true to them, and that also they know . . . he stands in the middle of it, and means to extort his own from it by such methods as there are. Magnanimous I can by no means call Friedrich to his allies and neighbours, nor even superstitiously veracious, in this business : but he thoroughly understands, he alone, what just thing he wants out of it, and what an enormous wigged mendacity it is he has got to deal with. For the rest, he is at the gaming-table with these sharpers ; their dice all cogged ;—and he knows it, and ought to profit by his knowledge of it. And in short, to win his stake out of that foul weltering melley, and go home safe with it if he can.

" Once more, a curious glimpse (perhaps imprudently allowed us, in the circumstances) into the real inner man of Friedrich. . . . Secret mode of correspondence with the Court of Austria is agreed upon." To assist his treachery Frederick gave Hyndford suggestions as to the manner in which the French Minister, Valori, could be hoodwinked. Carlyle tells the story without expressing disapproval. He makes Frederick say : " And you, Excellency Hyndford, be so good you as to write to me,—for Valori's behoof,—complaining that I am deaf to all proposals, that nothing can be had of me. And other Letters, pray, of the like tenor, all round ; to Presburg, to England, to Dresden :—if the Couriers are seized, it shall be well. ' Your letter to myself, let a trumpet come with it while I am at dinner,' and Valori beside me ! ' Certainly, your Majesty,' answers Hyndford ; and does it, does all this ; which produces a soothing effect on Valori, poor soul."

The assertion that Frederick's enemies were always trying to cheat him, and actually did so sometimes, is often made by Carlyle but never supported by any evidence. In one place he says there are letters in existence, from

Cardinal Fleury, the Minister of Louis XV, proving French treachery, but he does not say where they are to be found, nor does he cite them.

It was Frederick who cheated; he admitted it afterwards. While he was busy preparing this particular treachery, he wrote a number of letters to his ministers, and to his allies, declaring that he would never do anything so *infâme*. In the *Histoire de Mon Temps*, however, he wrote: "This is a delicate affair. The conduct of the King was shady" (*scabreux*); "it is necessary to explain its most secret motives." Then he proceeded to show what he gained by his treachery. Carlyle says nothing of these admissions. He objects that the real inner man of Frederick should not be imprudently exposed. He has only sneers for "superstitious veracity," and the "romantically true"; the thing is to seize what you desire "by such methods as there are," and "go home safe with it."

When Frederick marched into Saxony, protesting, as was his brazen custom, that he was acting solely in the interests of Saxony and its Elector, the Saxon troops retired to a fortified camp at Pirna, where they were surrounded by the Prussians. Carlyle stigmatised the Elector's refusal to surrender—which recalls that of the Belgians in 1914—as "Ovine obstinacy."

With regard to the partition of Poland, Carlyle says: "Whether his" (Frederick's) "notion was scientifically right, and conformable to actual fact, is a question I have no thought of entering on; still less, whether Friedrich was morally right, or whether there was not a higher rectitude, granting even the fact, in putting it in practice."

Declining to consider what was right, either scientifically right, or morally right, Carlyle proceeds to his infallible test. "If it even were certain that the wretched Polish Nation . . . did actually require prompt surgery in the usual method, by neighbours,—the neighbours shall and must do that function at their own risk. If Heaven did appoint them to it, Heaven, for certain, will at last justify them; and in the meanwhile, for a generation or two, the same Heaven (I can believe) has appointed that Earth

shall pretty unanimously condemn them. The shrieks, the foamlipped curses of mistaken mankind, in such case are mankind's one security against over-promptitude (which is so dreadfully possible) on the part of surgical neighbours."

It would appear that Heaven ordered the surgery, and also took care that mankind should indulge in mistaken curses about it. And in our day Heaven has issued counter-orders.

The Partition of Poland was described by Carlyle as " Heaven's Justice." In other words, the fact that it could be done was proof that it should be done. Might is Right.

2. *Mistakes*

The story Carlyle told, of Frederick and his Prussia, was not merely erroneous ; it was the opposite of the truth. His Frederick was a man of peace, who desired to spend his life playing the flute, composing French verses, and listening to the conversation of Voltaire ; but owing to the rascality of his neighbours, he was obliged to fight for his rights, against a huge coalition of predatory enemies, who had joined in a scheme to partition Prussia among themselves ; with iron determination and unexampled genius, he succeeded in beating off the attacks of enemies who came down upon him from all sides in great numbers.

All that is fiction. Frederick desired war ; he created it by attacking peaceful and harmless neighbours, who had no offensive designs against him ; though he learned gradually the trade of a commander, his early efforts gave no promise of ability, and he never showed any trace of genius ; on the battlefield he exhibited cowardice on two occasions ; after every reverse he wallowed in dejection, weeping copiously ; when affairs looked hopeless he resigned the command, only to resume it as soon as conditions had improved.

As for the inferiority of force, it was only for three months of the campaigning season that Russian troops

assisted the Austrians, and that Prussia had any weight of numbers against her. That Prussia succeeded in holding out for these short periods is creditable, but not such prowess as to earn a great military reputation. The Russians inflicted two defeats upon Frederick and his men, in two sanguinary battles, and the end would have come but for the jealousies of Russia's Allies, which rendered valueless the Russian victories and nullified the Russian assistance. To keep Austria in check under these conditions was by no means a startling achievement. Everybody beats Austria. What saved Frederick was the loyalty of Pitt and England to him, and the dissensions of his enemies, France, Austria, and Russia.

The stand made by the Anglo-Hanoverian troops under Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick against France, the strongest military power in Europe, was an achievement at least as meritorious as the Prussian record against Austria.

Those who have not studied the subject can hardly conceive the enormous divergence between the facts and the fables. It seems incredible that the legend of Frederick should be, as it is, wholly fictitious. It is a Prussian fairy-tale, spread abroad by Carlyle.

The mistakes in fact, in Carlyle's pages, run into hundreds, probably into thousands. A nearer computation is hardly feasible, so much of the book being given to gossipy anecdotes which are not worth examining. Some of these errors could not have been avoided when he wrote. Many, far too many, were due to carelessness, or to a partisanship so extreme that it took away the power of judgment. Here is an example.

Carlyle ascribed the participation of France in the Seven Years' War on the Continent, to the reply made by Frederick, when Voltaire told him that the mistress of Louis XV, Madame de Pompadour, desired to present her compliments. " The Pompadour, for instance : who was it that answered, ' *Je ne la connais pas.* I don't know her, I ' ? How gladly would the Imperial Maria Theresa, soul of Propriety, have made that answer ! But she did not : she had to answer differently. For Kaunitz was

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imperative : ' A kind little Note to the Pompadour, one, and then another and another ; it is indispensable, your Imperial Majesty ! ' And Imperial Majesty always had to do it. And there exist in writing, at this hour, various flattering little Notes from Imperial Majesty to that Address ; which began, ' *Ma cousine*,' ' *Princesse et Cousine*,' say many witnesses ; nay ' *Madame ma trés chère soeur*,' says one good witness—Notes which ought to have been printed, before this, or given at least to the Museums."

These events, which Carlyle said were the cause of France's entry into the Continental War, are not mentioned at all in the work of the German General Staff (*Der Siebenjährige Krieg*, 12 vols., 1901–13), which gives other, very different, explanations of the policy of France. Koser, the standard German authority (*Geschichte Friedrichs des Grossen*, 4 vols., 1912–14), says that it is a mistake to suppose that the King of Prussia slighted Madame de Pompadour ; on the contrary he told his Ambassador that it was immaterial to him whether it was through the male or the female sex that his aim was reached. Frederick sent explicit instructions to his Ambassadors to pay court to Madame de Pompadour, and to do so in his name. Madame on her part sent the King her compliments through the Duc de Nivernais, in 1755, and received polite messages in return.

Carlyle had before him the material for a correct judgment. He knew that Voltaire did not report to Madame de Pompadour the answer he had received. He knew also that the remark was made in 1750, and that Madame de Pompadour was then, and for six years afterwards remained, a supporter of the French alliance with Prussia.

The " Ma Cousine " letters were an invention of the enemy. Maria Theresa denied that she had ever written any such letters. Ranke discredited the story. It receives no support from modern Prussian or Austrian authorities. Carlyle preferred to ignore the probabilities of the case, in order to jeer at the Empress. The tale emanated from

Prussian circles and its genesis may therefore be surmised. Frederick himself discussed with his Ambassador at Paris the advisability of writing "direct" to Madame de Pompadour,[1] but concluded that he would lose more than he would gain by that attempt at bribery. He then conceived the idea of asserting that Maria Theresa had done what he alone had at one time contemplated.

The reliability of Carlyle as a historian may be judged from these examples of the prejudice by which he was influenced, which induced him to make statements which even the extreme Prussian admirers of Frederick are unable to countenance.

His battle pictures, which have been regarded as models of accuracy, have about as much truth in them as is to be found in the imaginative paintings of Horace Vernet or Gustave Doré. Carlyle accepted the fables propagated by Frederick himself, with all the enlargements of the Prussian panegyrists of the anti-Napoleon period.

It is only of late years that the facts have come to light. Koser corrected many errors but he remained too much under the influence of Frederick's inventions. The German General Staff history, however, is sometimes cold to Frederick. The suggestion is made that when things went wrong, it was not the fault of the Staff, or of the Army, but of the King himself. The Prussian, as distinct from the Hohenzollern, reputation is upheld. The facts are not always stated correctly. The numbers engaged in a battle, and the losses, are given in official lists in the Appendixes, but these figures—themselves doubtful—are not always followed in the text, where the Prussian force is diminished, that the fewer men may have the greater share of honour. On these and other matters the Staff history had been assailed, before the war of 1914–18, by capable German writers, who brought forward charges of misrepresentation.

The Austrian General Staff also produced a history, in eight thick volumes with a better collection of maps than the German. The Austrian version differs from that

[1] *Politische Correspondenz*, Vol. XII., pp. 73, 164.

of the conquerors. The official publications of Arneth are of great value. These Austrian sources are essential.

French writers who deserve attention—Bonnal, Broglie, Colin, Faguet, Lavisse, Sorel, Vandal, Waddington (Albert), Waddington (Richard)—have exhibited facts, hitherto concealed, which upset much of the Prussian case.

An immense supply of new documents of the first importance has become available by the publication by the German Foreign Office of the political correspondence of Frederick the Great, which was begun in 1879 and continued until 1914, when the thirty-sixth volume appeared. This collection has not received the attention it deserves.

No life of Frederick is worth much which ignores the thirty-six volumes of his *Politische Correspondenz*, and forgets the other important modern authorities, German, Austrian, and French. In face of all this new material it will readily be understood that Carlyle's book, which was always more Prussian than the Prussians, has now become obsolete ; and yet its influence is still visible in our text-books. This will not endure, but in the meantime erroneous ideas are promulgated which are injurious to the public interest. The book, if read at all, should be searched for its passages of rough humour, its stereoscopic scenes, its shining portraits, its touches of dramatic effect, not for its history—nor indeed for its morality.

8. *Reticence: not Dissimulation*

One of the things which everybody remembers about Carlyle is his incessant parade of his worship of Truth and Fact. He made such frequent, emphatic reference to this, that the Victorian world was much impressed—forgetting Carlyle's own doctrine that whoever boasts of a possession has already lost it. " Truth, though the Heavens fall," he cried repeatedly, so often that he quite convinced the public that his life-long crusade, the single object of his efforts, was to expose shams and falsehoods in all their many and various shapes.

But he declared also that the truth ought not to be made public. Those who have it in their keeping should treasure it as a jewel which is enclosed in a cupboard and shown only to select persons. Truth is not for children, nor for the mass of human beings. It should be kept from them, by means of reticence.

A Hero should never reveal the great truths which have come to him from on high, for fear of the consternation they might cause if widely disseminated. It is not merely the right, but the duty, of these inspired semi-divinities to keep the truth from the rest of mankind. Heroes are people upon whom has been bestowed the gift of veracity, which is wisdom, understanding, perception of Eternal Fact. It was not given them to be shared with others. To scatter it before swine would be an irreverence to the Divine Giver, an act of sacrilege and folly which no Hero could contemplate.

These views, of Ecclefechan origin, explain why Carlyle applauded the deceits of Frederick, and how he came to use similar subterfuges himself.

Carlyle's references to Frederick, in his letters and in conversation with friends, are of a kind which no reader of his book would have expected. He expressed opinions in private about which he exercised reticence in public. General John Sterling, in a letter to *The Times*, 11th January, 1917, said that in 1859 he called at Cheyne Row. Mrs. Carlyle told him that her husband was, as usual, agonising. He was gradually becoming aware that he had over-estimated Frederick. "The preliminary volumes were out. The great question arose as to whether the writer should continue in the heroic strain and deliver an artistic and complete whole, or whether he should make a confession of misconception, or, as an intermediate course, smooth over a break in harmony. The reader and the critic must, by perusal of the complete work decide as to the course pursued." The reader will find no break in harmony, no perceptible change of view.

In spite of the fact that her husband had already given

seven years of his life to the work, and that two volumes had been published, Mrs. Carlyle wished that, even now, he would give up the task, because he was trying, she said, to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The further he went the less did Carlyle appreciate Frederick, but no trace of any change was allowed to appear in the biography. When it had become a question between his own prestige and the truth, he succumbed to temptation.

Carlyle was in the habit of marking, in pencil, the book he was reading. He made lines in the margin ; he overlined a phrase, with a downward tag at each end ; he wrote comments in the margin, and sometimes drew a hand with a pointing finger. The London Library contains many such specimens of Carlyle's handiwork. They afford interesting revelations of the trend of his mind. Some of them are irreconcilable with the Frederick he was portraying. A caustic marginal note reveals opinions which are not expressed in Carlyle's book.

We have already noticed Carlyle's omission of a sentence in a letter written by Frederick, which spoke of the Treaty of 5th June, 1741 as a " solemn engagement," while Carlyle preferred to regard it as an " off-and-on," " fast-and-loose " affair. Another example is to be found in Carlyle's quotation from a despatch sent to London by Guy Dickens, British Minister at Berlin, dated 3rd December, 1740 : " ' Nobody here, great or small,' says his Excellency, ' dares make any representation to this young Prince against the measures he is pursuing ; though all are sensible of the confusion which must follow. A Prince who has the least regard,' " etc.

Carlyle's authority is, he says in a note, " Raumer, p. 58." Now according to Raumer, between the words " Must follow " and " a Prince," Dickens wrote : " After the declarations made by His Prussian Majesty at Vienna, London, and at the Hague, and after the letter he wrote me, on the tenth of last month, one would almost think it was impossible for a Prince who has the least regard," etc. This was not printed by Carlyle. There is no mention in his book of the dishonest declarations referred to

by Dickens, or of the deceptive letter of the 10th November.

Here is another example. On the 6th December, 1740, Dickens was received in audience by Frederick. Carlyle quotes the despatch, "which well abridged, may stand as follows:

> *Dickens*: 'Indivisibility of the Austrian Monarchy, Sire!'
>
> *King*: 'Indivisibility? What do you mean?'
>
> *Dickens:* 'The maintenance of the Pragmatic Sanction.'
>
> *King*: 'Do you intend to support it? I hope not; for such is not my intention.' (there is for you) . . .
>
> *Dickens*: 'England and Holland will much wonder at the measures your Majesty was taking,'" etc.

For his authority Carlyle refers to "Raumer (From State Paper Office) pp. 63, 64." Now Raumer (*Contributions to Modern History*, Vol. II., p. 63,) prints, correctly, from the State Papers, Foreign, Prussia, Vol. 48, p. 122, (to be found in the Record Office), an important passage between the words "my intention" and the paragraph beginning "England and Holland," in the space where Carlyle has put dots. "I told his Prussian Majesty, that according to our engagements, we were obliged to do it, and so was he too, to which he replied, That he had no such engagements, and if his Father had, he was not obliged by them nor would he stick to any which he had not himself contracted and ratified; observing the young Prince closely, I put him in mind of the letter he had been pleased to honour me with, of the tenth of last month, after which, and the Declaration made by His Majesty's order in England, and at the Hague, England and Holland," etc.

The omitted passage was important. Among the State Papers at the Record Office there is a despatch sent to London by Robinson, the British Ambassador at Vienna, 14th December, 1740, on hearing of Dickens's audience

with Frederick : " This Court founds its heaviest reproach of the King of Prussia as who upon Mr. Guy Dickens having mentioned the Guarantee given by the late King of Prussia of the Pragmatic Sanction, should have answered that he did not think himself bound by any of his father's engagements." The Chancellor said to Robinson : " He " (Frederick) " denies his being bound to his father's treaties."

The six large volumes of *The Life of Frederick the Great* were, as each one was published, received with a kind of awe. The writer seemed a being scarcely human, of god-like proportions. It was the size of the work which was so overwhelming ; and the loud complaints of the labour which the untiring genius had been obliged to undertake in his conscientious determination to state nothing but Fact and Truth, gave readers the impression that here was an achievement which none but a giant of giants could have compassed. And yet six volumes in twelve years is only at the rate of one volume in two years.

Carlyle took a large canvas and in the course of twelve years filled in a large number of figures. They stand out in the clearest way, though whether they are likenesses may well be doubted. At least we know that the chief figure, Frederick, is given proportions and qualities which he was far from possessing. The huge picture contains some very effective battle-pieces, mistaken and inaccurate, but presented with great dramatic power. The intervals between the battles and the portraits are filled in with scenes of the domestic life of princes and princesses and their retinues.

CHAPTER XXVI

DEATH OF MRS. CARLYLE

In November 1865 Carlyle was elected Lord Rector of Edinburgh University by 657 votes to 310 for Disraeli. He was to be installed, and to deliver an address, in the following spring. Mrs. Carlyle thought at one time of going to Edinburgh with him, but her health was still unsatisfactory; she realised that she would be very nervous during her husband's speech, and might perhaps be attacked by the sharp pain in the back which came now like a stab in weak moments. In her place went Tyndall, one of Carlyle's warmest admirers, who was to receive an honorary degree at Edinburgh; he volunteered to escort Carlyle. Leaving London on the 29th March, 1866, Carlyle and Tyndall reached Fryston Hall, the residence of Lord Houghton, the same day. On the 31st they went on to Edinburgh, accompanied by Huxley, who was also to receive an honorary degree.

The address was delivered on the 2nd April, 1866. Carlyle spoke clearly, in a very effective, impressive manner. One of those present wrote, in the *Argosy*, May 1866: "His face had not yet lost the country bronze which he brought up with him from Dumfriesshire as a student fifty-six years ago. His long residence in London had not touched his Annandale look, nor had it—as we soon learned—touched his Annandale accent. His countenance was striking—homely, sincere, truthful—the countenance of a man in whom 'the burden of the unintelligible world' had weighed more heavily than on most. His hair was yet almost dark; his moustache and short beard were iron grey. His eyes were wide, melancholy, sorrowful; and seemed as if they had been at times, a'weary of the sun.'

Altogether in his aspect there was something aboriginal as a piece of unhewn granite." Another reporter said: "It was continuous, strong, quiet talk, like a patriarch about to leave the world, to the young lads who had chosen him and were just entering the world. His voice is a soft downy voice—not a tone in it is of the shrill fierce kind that one would expect it to be in reading the *Latter-day Pamphlets*. . . . He concluded by reciting his own translation of a poem of Goethe—'The future hides in it gladness and sorrow.' And this he did in a style of melancholy grandeur not to be described, but still less to be forgotten."

There was nothing in the address with which Carlyle's readers were not already familiar; it contained, as *The Times* remarked, the old platitudes, the old truths, and the old errors. But the tone was moderate, the voice soft and downy, in contrast to the shrill rasping of the *Latter-day Pamphlets*, which might now be thrust away into the background, to be forgiven and forgotten. Carlyle was always kindly and considerate when speaking to young men who approached him with reverence.

He began by repeating his doctrine of work, telling the students that their first duty was to be diligent. Next to that came mental honesty, to read what "you have a real interest in, a real not an imaginary." It is better not to read at all than to read a bad book. "Books are like men's souls; divided into sheep and goats."

The Greeks and Romans were great because they were religious. They believed in "a great unknown, omnipotent, and all-wise and all-just Being, superintending all men."

Then followed Carlyle's version of the Three Reverences in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*, a purely Carlylean gloss on Goethe. Then the surprising statement was made that Goethe had expounded "a scheme of entirely mute education," an interpretation which would have astonished Goethe. Carlyle wanted all men to be subjected to military drill, which he chose to regard as a mute education. A trained soldier, he told the students, is "a wonder of wonders." Originally "rough, rude, ignorant, disobedient," he is made to "go where bidden," he "does

practically whatever is commanded. . . . Very many things could be regimented, organised into this mute system: and probably in some of the mechanical, commercial and manufacturing departments some faint incipiences may be attempted before very long.

"For I need not hide from you, young gentlemen, that you have got into a very troublesome epoch of the world. . . . We have got into the age of revolutions. . . . Man is becoming more and more the son not of Cosmos, but of Chaos. He is a disobedient, discontented, reckless and altogether waste kind of object (the commonplace man is, in these epochs); and the wiser kind of man—the select few, of whom I hope you will be part—has more and more to see to this, to look vigilantly forward; and will require to move with wisdom. Will find, in short, that the crooked things he has got to pull straight in his own life all round him, wherever he may go, are manifold, and will task all his strength, however great it be.

"But why should I complain of that either? For that is the thing a man is born to, in all epochs. He is born to expend every particle of strength that God Almighty has given him, in doing the work he finds he is fit for; to stand up to it to the last breath of life, and do his best."

Then he recited, in a very impressive manner, his translation of Goethe's poem:

The Future hides in it
Gladness and sorrow;
We press still thorow,
Nought that abides in it
Daunting us—onward.

And solemn before us,
Veiled, the dark Portal;
Goal of the mortal—
Stars silent rest o'er us,
Graves under us silent.

While earnest thou gazest,
Comes boding of terror,
Comes phantasm and error,
Perplexes the bravest
With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,
Heard are the Sages,
The Worlds and the Ages :
Choose well ; your choice is
Brief, and yet endless.

Here eyes do regard you,
In Eternity's stillness ;
Here is all fulness,
Ye brave, to reward you ;
Work, and despair not.

He concluded, " Work and despair not : *Wir heissen euch hoffen.* We bid you be of hope. Let that be my last word."

The audience was moved to the depths. Carlyle had touched the feelings of those who heard him, adult and adolescent, in a way that they had never experienced before and would never forget. Some of them felt constrained to worship him as a being semi-divine.

" A perfect triumph," telegraphed Tyndall to Mrs. Carlyle. In her weak condition of health the receipt of the telegram brought on a fit of hysterics. She dined that evening, 2nd April, 1866, with John Forster, meeting Dickens and Wilkie Collins, and they drank Carlyle's health " with great glee." Mrs. Carlyle wrote to a friend, 5th April, " I haven't been so fond of everybody, and so pleased with the world, since I was a girl, as just in these days when reading the letters of his friends, your own included."

From Edinburgh Carlyle went to Scotsbrig on the 7th April. His return to London was delayed by a slight sprain to his foot. Mrs. Carlyle dined with Lord and Lady Lothian on the 5th ; visited Mrs. Oliphant at Windsor on the 6th and 7th ; on the 8th dined with Lady William Russell, and had to put off Lady Airlie, who offered herself for tea ; on the 10th Lady Lothian called, and Mrs. Carlyle dined with Miss Bromley.

There was to be a tea-party at Cheyne Row on the 21st April, in anticipation of Carlyle's return on the 23rd. The company invited included Mrs. Oliphant, Principal

Tulloch with his wife and two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Froude, Mr. and Mrs. Spottiswoode, Miss Wynne, and Miss Jewsbury. Mrs. Carlyle wrote to her husband in the morning, "To-morrow, after the tea party, I may have more to say, provided I survive it." She did not reach it. She died in her brougham, driving in Hyde Park, in the early afternoon of that day, 21st April, 1866.

It was her custom to drive round the Park in the afternoon. When the carriage had reached Victoria Gate, Mrs. Carlyle put out her little dog—a gift from Lady Trevelyan—for a run. The wheel of an approaching carriage went over the dog's toe. Mrs. Carlyle sprang out to its assistance, and took it back into the brougham. There, death from heart failure took her quietly away. The coachman drove round the Park until, becoming anxious at the non-receipt of any order, he stopped the carriage and asked a lady to look in; the lady, having done so, appealed to a gentleman, who, after looking into the carriage in his turn, told the man to drive at once to St. George's Hospital close by. By the good offices of Forster, supported by Dr. Quain, an inquest was averted.

The terrible news reached Carlyle in the evening. He returned to London on the 23rd. Three days later, on the 26th April, Mrs. Carlyle was buried in her father's grave in the old Abbey Kirk at Haddington, long in ruin, open to the sky. At the graveside stood Carlyle, his brother John, John Forster, and Twistleton.

He applied to Miss Jewsbury, as the most reliable person, for a written account of what had occurred. After a detailed statement, Miss Jewsbury concluded as follows: "On that miserable night" (21st April, 1866), "when we were preparing to receive her, Mrs. Warren" (housekeeper at Cheyne Row) "came to me and said, that one time when she was very ill, she said to her, that when the last had come, she was to go upstairs into the closet of the spare room and there she would find two wax candles wrapt in paper, and that those were to be lighted, and burned. She said that after she came to live in London, she wanted to give a party. Her mother wished everything to be very

nice, and went out and bought candles and confectionery : and set out a table, and lighted up the room quite splendidly and called her to come and see it, when all was prepared. She was angry ; she said people would say she was extravagant, and would ruin her husband. She took away two of the candles and some of the cakes. Her mother was hurt and began to weep. She was pained at once at what she had done ; she tried to comfort her, and was dreadfully sorry. She took the candles and wrapped them up, and put them where they could be easily found. We found them and lighted them, and did as she had desired." On reading this, Carlyle made enquiries of Mrs. Warren, and found that " Geraldine's report is perfectly true."

The epitaph, engraved on a tablet embedded on the tombstone at Haddington, contained the following words, composed by Carlyle : " In her bright existence she had more sorrows than are common ; but also a soft invincibility, a clearness of discernment, and a noble loyalty of heart, which are rare. For forty years she was the true and ever loving helpmate of her husband, and, by act and word, unweariedly forwarded him, as none else could, in all of worthy that he did or attempted. She died at London, 21st April, 1866 ; suddenly snatched away from him, and the light of his life, as if gone out."

CHAPTER XXVII

THE LAST YEARS

THE death of his wife was a stunning blow to Carlyle. It meant, he said, "the loss of all that made life valuable." Perhaps he hardly realised how vital her influence had been to him as a support and a stimulant. First as Jane Welsh, then as his wife, in the early years when he had written nothing and was allowing his abilities to run to waste, she had urged, encouraged, and finally pushed him to work. Though he never perceived what he owed to her in his career, he discovered, now that he was left solitary in the house, how much her presence had meant to him, how carefully she had sheltered him from the ordinary trials of life. He came across a passage, in one of her letters to a friend, in which she said that to protect her husband, she had to gather the enemies' spears into her own breast. On reading this, Carlyle was much moved. He put a note at the foot, "Oh, heavens, the comparison! It was too true." To make some amends he set to work upon a memoir in which he gave expression to his regret for the imperfections of his conduct towards his wife.

"Oh, it is beautiful to me," he wrote, "and oh, it is humbling, and it is sad! Where was my Jeannie's peer in this world? and she fell to me, and I could not screen her from the bitterest distresses! God pity and forgive me. My own burden, too, might have broken a stronger back,—had she not been so loyal and loving." When she lost her mother, "My sympathy how paltry and imperfect was it to what hers would have been for me! Stony-hearted! Shame on me!" If only he could tell her how he had loved her. "Ah me! she never knew fully, nor could I show her in my heavy-laden miserable life, how

much I had at all times regarded, loved, and admired her. No telling of her now. Five minutes more of your dear company in this world. Oh that I had you yet for but five minutes, to tell you all!" He repeated this several times. "Blind and deaf that we are: oh, think, if thou yet love anybody living, wait not till death sweep down the paltry little dust-clouds and idle dissonances of the moment, and all be at last so mournfully clear and beautiful, when it is too late!" On every anniversary of his wife's death he went, if he was in London, to the spot in Hyde Park where she had been last seen alive, and stood there bare-headed.

Few widowers, or widows, are free from such sad reflections. It is the lot of man, and of woman, in such conditions, to be consumed by unavailing remorse. In Carlyle's case it was due, for lack of consideration, for inattention to wants. He did not see and he did not know what a less self-centred man would have seen and known.

As a memorial to his wife, he decided to give her property of Craigenputtock, after his death, to Edinburgh University for "John Welsh Bursaries." On the 20th June, 1867, he executed a deed giving effect to his wishes; the witnesses to his signature were John Forster and J. A. Froude. The rental of Craigenputtock at that time, on a lease of nineteen years, was £250, but, with improvements then in progress, Carlyle considered the property would be worth £300 a year.

He was still able to give attention to public affairs. He espoused the cause of Governor Eyre, of Jamaica, who had been recalled by the Government, charged with unnecessary severities. Carlyle was Chairman of the Eyre Defence Committee, supported by Tyndall, Ruskin, Tennyson, Stephen, Henry Kingsley, Sir R. Murchison; on the other side were the Baptists and other religious bodies, the Abolitionists, the political and philosophical Liberals, Mill, John Bright, Fawcett, Goldwin Smith, Herbert Spencer, Frederic Harrison, and the two most eminent men of science, Huxley and Darwin.

The first results of emancipation in Jamaica had been a deterioration in the character of the negroes, a disinclination for voluntary work, and an insolent demeanour. Agitators

found it easy to influence their minds and convince them that there was nothing to prevent them from exterminating the whites and seizing their properties. There was a rebellion, and a massacre of whites, organised and premeditated, by armed bands of negroes. Martial law was proclaimed, and a number of the insurgents were executed. The rebellion was thus promptly suppressed. It was said that too much severity had been exercised. Governor Eyre was brought before a legal tribunal in London. The Grand Jury, after hearing the evidence, declared that there was not even a prima facie case against him. There had been excesses by the British troops, but for these the military authorities had been solely responsible; and the danger to the white population had been real and great. Eyre, however, though completely exonerated, remained out of employment. This was a case made for Carlyle. It exposed some of the danger that emancipation from slavery might for a time produce, and it exhibited the humanitarians and philanthropists clearly in the wrong. Carlyle declared that he would make Eyre "dictator of Jamaica for the next twenty-five years," if he had the power.

In December he went to Menton, on a visit to Lady Ashburton, who owned a villa there. Tyndall volunteered to act as courier, though he had to return to London almost immediately, after only a few days of rest. In the spring Carlyle achieved the return journey to London alone, without mishap.

The last of Carlyle's political essays was published in August 1867, in *Macmillan's Magazine*. He called it, "Shooting Niagara: and After?" It was the year of Disraeli's Reform Bill, and this is how Carlyle began: "There probably never was since the Heptarchy ended, or almost since it began, so hugely critical an epoch in the history of England as this we have now entered upon, with universal self-congratulation and flinging-up of caps." Democracy was "to complete itself," with "complete 'liberty' to all persons . . . in such an England, with its hundred-and-fifty millions 'free' more and more to follow

each his own nose, by way of guide-post in this intricate world. . . . Universal 'glorious liberty' (to Sons of the Devil in overwhelming majority, as would appear); count of Heads the God-appointed way in this Universe."

A historian of the French Revolution should have rectified, instead of accepting, the common delusion that democracy means liberty.

The statement that the population of England numbered a hundred and fifty millions is an example of Carlyle's wantonness with figures. Possibly he may have been thinking of India, and imagining universal suffrage in that country.

He repeated his objections to "servantship on the *nomadic* principle," preferring a "contract for life"; and reprinted the *Ilias in Luce*, first published in *Macmillan's Magazine*, August 1863, in which he gave encouragement to the slave-owners of the South.

"Well deserved annihilation; and dismissal from God's universe, that and nothing else lies ahead for our once heroic England," unless the aristocracy come to the rescue, "the noble Few, who we always trust will be born to us, generation after generation; and in whom and whose living of a noble and valiantly cosmic life amid the worst impediments and hugest anarchies, the whole of our hope depends. Yes, in them only. . . . Aristocracy by title, by fortune and position, who can doubt but there are still precious possibilities among the chosen of that class?"

Having for some years been a frequenter of fashionable mansions, Carlyle no longer spoke of the aristocracy as partridge-shooters. "A body of brave men, and of beautiful polite women, furnished *gratis* as they are, ought to be good for something, in a society mostly fallen vulgar and chaotic like ours! The English nobleman has still left in him something considerable of chivalry and magnanimity: polite he is, in the finest form; politeness, modest, simple, veritable, ineradicable, dwells in him to the bone; I incline to call him the politest kind of nobleman or man (especially his wife the politest and gracefullest

kind of woman) you will find in any country. An immense endowment this, if you consider it well!

"In their own domains and land territories, it is evident each of them can still for certain years and decades be a complete king; and may, if he strenuously try, mould and arrange everything till both his people and his dominion correspond gradually to the ideal he has formed. Refractory subjects he has the means of banishing; the relations between all classes, from the biggest farmer to the poorest orphan ploughboy, are under his control; nothing ugly or unjust or improper, but he could by degrees undertake steady war against, and manfully subdue or extirpate.

"There is a great deal more in genealogy than is generally believed at present . . . it goes for a great deal, the hereditary principle, in Government as in other things; and it must be again recognised so soon as there is any fixity in things." Like the gloomy preachers of our day, Carlyle believed in the all-importance of inheritance. Pessimists are eugenists, and eugenists are pessimists.

The "silent Industrial Hero . . . is already almost an aristocrat by class and he cannot do better than unite with this naturally noble kind of Aristocrat by title; the Industrial noble and this one are brothers born; called and impelled to co-operate and go together." They will have to deal with "Beales and his 50,000 roughs," "the loud rabble and their spokesmen."

"I see well it must at length come to battle; actual fighting, bloody wrestling and a great deal of it; but were it unit against thousand, or against thousand-thousand on the above terms, I know the issue and have no fear about it."

No genuine work was done any more in England. "'Four eights' and workman's Pisgah Song; all these are diabolical short-cuts towards wages; clutchings at money without just work done; all these are *Cheap and Nasty* in another form." The four eights were "Eight hours to work, eight hours to play, eight hours to sleep, and eight shillings a day." "The glory of a workman," continued Carlyle, "still more of a master-worker, that

he does his work well, ought to be his most precious possession; like 'the honour of a soldier,' dearer to him than life."

Carlyle did much to spread the idea that hypocrisy is a peculiarly English vice. "For we are a people drowned in hypocrisy," he said, "saturated with it to the bone." We rather enjoy calling ourselves hypocrites. We point to Pecksniff, and say that no other nation can produce such a character. But there is not so much truth in the charge as is generally supposed. We are more sincere and straightforward than other nations. Hypocrisy must have a difficult life in the bosom of the one nation which is known to all the world for speaking the truth, for honest dealing, for adhering to its engagements, for the genuine nature of its products. "*Parola Inglese*"—a South American equivalent for "Bible oath"—expresses an opinion of Englishmen which is to be found in every quarter of the globe.

In the autumn of 1868, Carlyle's niece, Mary Aitken, daughter of his sister Mrs. Aitken, came to live permanently at Cheyne Row as her uncle's companion and amanuensis. The presence of this young girl, just from school, who regarded her uncle with awe and reverence, was a benign influence. It was with Carlyle as it had been with his father—old age quieted the fires, his "natural asperity became much softened." The cessation of the sharp tones which had been beside him throughout his married life assisted the mellowing of old age. The Carlyle of Mary Aitken's time was a milder person than the tormented and tormenting husband of Jane Welsh.

On the 4th March, 1869, Carlyle was presented to Queen Victoria, by Dean Stanley, at the Deanery, Westminster. Others present, besides the Lady-in-Waiting (Dowager Duchess of Atholl) and the Stanleys, were Sir Charles and Lady Lyell, Mr. and Mrs. Grote, and Robert Browning. Each had a few words with the Queen.

Old friends were passing away. John Chorley died in July 1867, leaving Carlyle a legacy of £500. On the 21st November, 1868, died Thomas Spedding; on the

20th March, 1870, T. Erskine; on the 6th June, Charles Dickens. Carlyle continued to visit the Dowager Lady Ashburton at her various residences. He went to Addiscombe in July, and in September 1869; to Melchet Court, Romsey, in February 1870 and May 1871; to the Highlands in August 1871; to Seaford Cottage, Devon, for five weeks in the autumn of 1872.

He could no longer use his hand for writing; he had to dictate to his niece, and never felt at ease in composition in that manner. He spent ten days over a letter to *The Times*, finished on 11th November, 1870, on the Franco-Prussian War. It was published on the 18th November. France was in the dust, Paris surrounded by the victorious German army. A feeling of compassion for France was rising, which might have issued in an English attempt at intervention. Carlyle effectually smothered whatever hope there may have been.

He informed the British public that France had always been a bad neighbour to Germany, and had stolen Alsace-Lorraine, which should be returned. "Considerable misconception as to Herr von Bismarck is still prevalent in England. . . . Bismarck, as I read him, is not a person of 'Napoleonic ideas,' but of ideas quite superior to Napoleonic, shows no invincible 'lust of territory' nor is tormented with vulgar ambition, etc., but has aims very far beyond that sphere; and in fact seems to me to be striving with strong faculty, by patient, grand and successful steps, towards an object beneficial to Germans and to all other men. That noble, patient, deep, pious and solid Germany should be at length welded into a nation and become Queen of the Continent, instead of vapouring vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and oversensitive France, seems to me the hopefullest public fact that has occurred in my time."

The Times remarked that "when the letter has been read and read again, the last judgment of the sincere student will be a repudiation of its conclusions. We may even add, a protest against the method of its reasoning. It may be even doubted whether the events Mr.

Carlyle recalls are not mis-remembered." When the three bishoprics—Metz, Toul, Verdun—were occupied by Henri II in 1552, "they were even then—and the event happened five years before we lost Calais—French cities in tongue and in race." If that consideration is ignored, then we, on our part, " may reclaim Calais, Spain may put in a plea for Holland, and the House of Austria may insist on the restitution of Flanders, which was hers—to speak comparatively—but yesterday."

As *The Times* observed, Carlyle cared nothing for the wishes of the people of Alsace Lorraine ; he " treated provinces as chattels, and their inhabitants as vermin." The editorial article concluded with the declaration that the German proposal to annex Alsace-Lorraine which Carlyle had declared " just, rational and wise " was, in fact " unjust, irrational and foolish."

Carlyle's history was incorrect, his argument untenable, and time has upset his policy. Like the rest of the world, he was misinformed as to the origin of the war of 1870–1 ; he believed that France had been the aggressor. There is no reason to suppose that he would have written differently if he had known the truth. He approved of the treacherous attack by Frederick the Great on Maria Theresa in 1740, and accepted the fantastic and baseless excuse that was made for it, that Silesia had been stolen from Prussia in the remote past. He endorsed similar claims in 1870 with regard to Alsace-Lorraine, and would have applauded Bismarck for bringing on the war.

By this letter Carlyle did Germany a service of real importance. In spite of the protests of *The Times* it was believed in England that Germany was justified in severing Alsace and part of Lorraine from France, because Carlyle said so. On the 25th November, a week after his letter was published, he received from Count Bernstorff, the Prussian Ambassador, the thanks of his Government for this stroke on behalf of Prussia.

On the 11th May, 1871, he was presented by Count Bernstorff to the Empress Augusta at the German Embassy. On the 12th February, 1874, he received, through the

German Ambassador, the Prussian Order of Merit, becoming, on the death of Manzoni, one of the thirty foreign knights.

In December, Disraeli offered him the Grand Cross of the Bath, with a pension. He declined both. A title he might have accepted in his wife's lifetime, but it could have no attraction for a solitary old man. He required no pension, for he had more money than he knew how to spend. The Countess of Derby had suggested the idea to Disraeli, and it appears that Queen Victoria's interest had been obtained.

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, 4th December, 1875, Carlyle received a gold medal designed by Boehm, and an address of respect and congratulation, written by John Morley and David Masson and signed by one hundred and twenty of the most eminent men and women of the time. The same day a letter came from Bismarck in which he praised Carlyle's portrait of Frederick the Great. Carlyle replied, thanking Bismarck for the pertinent and flattering remarks about his history of Frederick; and he wished the Chancellor every prosperity in his great and noble career.

According to Moncure Conway, Carlyle "confessed that he had been mistaken about Frederick the Great." The confession must have been made after this eightieth birthday. It appears that after thirteen years of steady work, and a subsequent period of more than ten years for reflection, Carlyle in his old age found that he had been "mistaken"; though we are not told that he had come upon any new sources of information.

The deaths of friends and relations continued. Mill died in 1873; John Forster on the 1st February, 1876; the brother Alick in Canada, 30th March, 1876; the brother John on the 15th September, 1879.

At the time of the "Jingo" agitation, during the Russo-Turkish War, Carlyle wrote to a friend a letter, dated 24th November, 1877, in support of Russia.[1] "The

[1] *Mr. Carlyle on the Eastern Question*, by E. Cazalet, with a letter from Carlyle addressed to G. Howard.

present Czar I judge to be a strictly honest and just man, and, in short, my belief is, that the Russians are called to do great things in the world, and to be a conspicuous benefit, directly or indirectly, to their fellow-men." The "unspeakable Turk" should be driven out of Europe, and the abandoned provinces divided between Austria and Russia. Austria was destined to become a "Slavic and Hungarian Empire," her German population "gravitating towards their countrymen of the Great German Empire." England had only "one vital interest"—the security of the road to India. Carlyle suggested that a settlement on these lines might be obtained with the assistance of Bismarck as arbitrator.

"It seems to me the advice of Prince Bismarck, a magnanimous, noble and deep-seeing man, who has no national aims or interests in the matter, might be very valuable; nay were he appointed arbiter where difficult dissidences arose, what but benefit would be likely to result?"

Carlyle's nephew, Alexander Carlyle, who married his cousin, Mary Aitken, and lived with her at Cheyne Row, says that "In his later years when he had learned the truth about the origin of the War" (of 1870), "and had gained authentic knowledge of the true character of Bismarck, it was evident to all who talked with him that there was a very sensible diminution of his approval and admiration of Germany and her great Chancellor. I myself have heard him speak disparagingly of Bismarck[1]"; and he quotes Allingham's remark in his diary, 1878, that Carlyle "seems to have got fresh lights on Bismarck's character." This change of opinion must have occurred after the letter, cited above, of November 1876, when Carlyle had nearly reached the age of eighty-one.

In his old age he discovered that he had been teaching false doctrine about Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Germany, and the American Civil War. It is unfortunate that the enlightenment did not come to him earlier, before he was too old to correct the errors he had forced upon the public in the days of his manhood.

[1] *Cornhill Magazine*, June 1921, p. 767.

The most frequent visitor now was Froude, for whom Carlyle felt both affection and admiration. When the first volume of Froude's *History of England* was published, in 1856, Carlyle wrote to him: "Alter or not, however, there is such a generous breadth of intelligence, of manly sympathy, sound judgment, and in general of luminous solidity, promised in this Book, that I will gladly read it, however it be put together."[1] When Froude went to America in 1872, Carlyle wrote to Emerson, "He is the valuablest Friend I now have in England."[2] To Mrs. Froude he wrote, 5th December, 1872, about Froude's *English in Ireland in the Eighteenth Century*: "What he is saying about Ireland is the genuine truth, or the nearest to it that has ever been said by any person whatever. . . . To myself there is a ring in it as of clear steel; and my prophecy is that all the roaring blockheads of the world cannot prevent its natural effect on human souls. Sooner or later all persons will have to believe it."[3] To Erskine he wrote, 23rd January, 1868: "Excepting Froude almost alone, whom I see once a week, there is hardly anybody whose talk, always polite, clear, sharp and sincere, does me any considerable good. He has an excellent article in the last *Fraser's Magazine*, on 'Protestantism,' which I think you, if you have not already read it, would read with sympathy."[4]

He gave Froude his papers, with unfettered discretion to publish or not, as he might decide, and entrusted him with the task of writing his biography.

The doctrine of evolution was not in accord with Carlyle's mediæval prejudices. "All things from frog-spawn; the gospel of dirt the order of the day." "It is an utterly contemptible theory, that out of dead blind dust could be spread the sense of right and wrong."[5] "Wonderful to me," he wrote in the *Reminiscences*, "as indicating the capricious stupidity of mankind; never could read a page

[1] *Life of J. A. Froude*, by Herbert Paul, 1905, p. 86.
[2] *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, 1881, II., 353.
[3] *Life of J. A. Froude*, by Herbert Paul, 1905, p. 224.
[4] *Letters of Thomas Erskine*, edited by W. Hanna, 1877.
[5] William Allingham. *A Diary*, pp. 245, 279.

of it, or waste the least thought upon it." He asked Darwin whether there was a possibility of men turning into apes again.

On the subject of immortality he said to Tennyson one day, " Eh, old Jewish rags, you must clear your mind of all that. Why should we expect a hereafter? "[1] On the other hand, Masson, who knew him well in his later years, says, " He liked to think there is a life beyond the grave."[2]

Many times in his life had Carlyle expressed his assurance that the members of his family would meet again after death. He never abandoned his belief in the immortality of the elect. When he spoke to Tennyson he was thinking of the generality of mankind. There is an entry in his diary of the 14th October, 1849, in which he refers to the future reserved for the chosen. He says that he has been looking out at night on the stars and reflecting that in a little while he should have seen them for the last time. " Another, a second feeling rose in me. What if Omnipotence which has developed in me these pieties, these reverences and infinite affections, should actually have said, Yes, poor mortals, Such of you as have gone so far shall be permitted to go further. Hope, Despair not."

The end came on the 5th February, 1881, at the age of eighty-five years and two months. Westminster Abbey was offered by the dean, but, in accordance with Carlyle's express wish, his body was laid to rest between his mother and his brother John, close to his father, in the Ecclefechan churchyard. At the graveside, on the 10th February, 1881, stood Tyndall, Lecky, Conway, Froude, James Carlyle, the surviving brother, and a number of nephews and other relatives.

[1] *Tennyson and his Friends*, p. 379.
[2] *Carlyle, Personally and in his Writings*, by David Masson, 1885, p. 92.

CHAPTER XXVIII

POST-MORTEM

OF all Carlyle's later friends, the most intimate and the most devoted was Froude. He was not merely an admirer, but a disciple. Froude, therefore, was obviously the man to whom Carlyle could entrust his papers. These consisted of an immense quantity of correspondence—many thousands of letters, carefully kept, from the early years; the *Reminiscences* written by Carlyle after the death of his wife, beginning with "Jane Welsh Carlyle," and followed by "Edward Irving," "Lord Jeffrey," and a few pages on "Southey" and "Wordsworth"; his wife's letters, to a selection of which he appended notes and explanations, written in 1868–9; and an account of his father, written after his father's death in 1832.

He wrote at the end of the paper on "Jane Welsh Carlyle" an injunction against publication without fit editing, which, as regards nine-tenths of it, would, after he was gone, have become impossible. He left instructions that his wife's letters, with his notes, were not to be published for twenty years. The letters of courtship, which had been mislaid, were, if ever found, to be burned; they were never to be printed. These letters were afterwards found in December 1869.

All these prohibitions were afterwards rescinded.

In June 1871, Carlyle took to Froude's house a large parcel containing a copy of the Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle, and a copy of the Letters and Memorials. These copies had been made by Carlyle's niece, Miss Mary Aitken. "He put the parcel," said Froude, "in my hands. He told me to take it simply and absolutely as my own, without

reference to any other person or persons, and to do with it as I pleased after he was gone. He explained, when he saw me surprised, that it was an account of his wife's history, that it was incomplete, that he could himself form no opinion whether it ought to be published or not, that he could do no more to it, and must pass it over to me. He wished never to hear of it again. I must judge. I must publish it, the whole, or part—or else destroy it all, if I thought this would be the wiser thing to do. He said nothing of any limit of time. I was to wait only till he was dead, and he was then in constant expectation of his end. Of himself he desired that no biography should be written and that this Memoir, if any, should be the authorised record of him. So extraordinary a mark of confidence touched me deeply, but the responsibility was not to be hastily accepted. I was then going into the country for the summer. I said that I would take the MS. with me, and would either write to him or would give him an answer when we met in the autumn."[1]

A letter written by Carlyle to Froude in the autumn exhibits his anxiety to learn his friend's decision. "I long much," wrote Carlyle on the 26th September, 1871, "with a tremulous, deep and almost painful feeling, about that other manuscript which you were kind enough to read at the very first. Be prepared to tell me, with all your candour, the pros and contras there."[2]

"When I saw him again after the summer," continues Froude, "we talked the subject over with the fullest confidence. He was nervously anxious to know my resolution. I told him that, so far as I could then form an opinion, I thought that the letters *might* be published, provided the prohibition was withdrawn against publishing his own Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle. That would show what his feeling had really been, and what she had really been, which also might perhaps be misconstrued. It would have

[1] *Carlyle's Life in London*, II., 437–8. A statement to the same effect was made by Froude in a letter to *The Times*, published on the 14th February, 1881.

[2] *The Life of Froude*, by Herbert Paul, 1905, p. 294, note 2.

been hard on both of them if the sharp censures of Mrs. Carlyle's pen had been left unrelieved. The copy of the Memoir had indeed been given to me among the other papers, that I might make use of it as I liked, and he had perhaps forgotten that any prohibition had been attached, but I required, and I received, a direct permission to print it. The next question was about the time of publication. . . . When he had given them to me in June he had told me only that I was to wait till he was gone. He said now that ten years would be enough—ten years from that time."[1] If Froude was in any difficulty he was to consult John Forster and John Carlyle.

Froude sent the manuscripts to Forster, who, after reading them, went to Carlyle and told him that he ought to make the position perfectly clear in his will or trouble would certainly arise about it.

On the 6th February, 1873, Carlyle made his will. He said: "My Manuscript entitled 'Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle' is to me, naturally, in my now bereaved state, of endless value, though of what value to others I cannot in the least clearly judge; and indeed, for the last four years am imperatively forbidden to write on it, or even to look farther into it. Of that Manuscript, my kind, considerate and ever-faithful friend, John Anthony Froude (as he has lovingly promised me) takes precious charge in my stead; to him, therefore, I give it with whatever other fartherances and elucidations may be possible; and I solemnly request of him to do his best and wisest in the matter, as I feel assured he will. There is incidentally a quantity of Autobiographic Record in my notes to this Manuscript; but except as subsidiary and elucidative of the Fact I put no value on such: express Biography of me I had really rather that there should be none. James Anthony Froude, John Forster and my brother John, will make earnest survey of the Manuscript and its subsidiaries there or elsewhere, in respect of this as well as its other bearings; their united utmost candour and impartiality (taking always James Anthony Froude's

[1] *Carlyle's Life in London*, II., 440–1.

practicality along with it) will evidently furnish a better judgment than mine can be. The Manuscript is by no means ready for publication; nay, the questions, How, When (after what delay, seven, ten years) it, or any portion of it, should be published, are still dark to me; but in all such points James Anthony Froude's practical summing up and decision is to be taken as mine. The imperfect copy of the said Manuscript which is among my papers with the original letters I give to my Niece, Mary Carlyle Aitken. My other Manuscripts I leave to my brother John. They are with one exception of no moment to me; I have never seen any of them since they were written. One of them is a set of fragments about James First, which were loyally fished out for me from much other Cromwellian rubbish, and doubtless carefully copied more than twenty years ago by the late John Chorley who was always so good to me. But neither this latter, nor perhaps any of the others, is worth printing. On this point however, my Brother can take Counsel with John Forster and James Anthony Froude, and do what is then judged fittest. Many or most of these Papers I often feel that I myself should burn; but probably I never shall after all. The 'one exception,' spoken of above, is a sketch of my Father and his life hastily thrown off in the nights between his death and burial, full of earnest affection and veracity:—most likely unfit for printing; but I wish it to be taken charge of by my brother John, and preserved in the Family. Since, I think, the very night of my Father's Funeral (far away from London and me!) I have never seen a word of that poor bit of writing."

Carlyle gives to Froude "my Manuscript entitled 'Letters and Memorials of Jane Welsh Carlyle,'" with "whatever other fartherances and elucidations may be possible." That must be held to include all papers relating to Mrs. Carlyle, or to her letters. The Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle is, therefore, given to Froude. That this was the testator's intention is confirmed by the passage in the will beginning with the words "My other Manuscripts." There he says that, except the memoir of his father, these

manuscripts are "of no moment to me," which he could never have said of the Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle. As an example of the sort of material to which he is now referring he instances "a set of fragments about James First." The Memoir was regarded as an introduction to the Letters and Memorials. Clearly, then, the injunction against printing it without fit editing had been withdrawn, not only verbally, but by the terms of the will. The copy of the Memoir, of the letters, and the Notes were bequeathed to Froude, for the purpose of publication, all details as to time, quantity, manner, being left to his discretion.

It has been contended that Froude was mistaken in asserting that it was in 1871 that these papers were given to him; that they must have been received by him after the date of Carlyle's will. For "if Carlyle made a gift of these papers to him in 1871, it is remarkable that he should specifically bequeath them to him by will in 1873."[1] There would be nothing remarkable in such a proceeding; it is a natural precaution to affirm by will a verbal gift. And in this instance the will was made, on the advice of Forster, for the express purpose of removing all doubt as to Carlyle's intentions. The words of the will indicate that the papers were then already in the keeping of Froude. "Of that Manuscript," says the will, "my kind, considerate and ever-faithful friend, James Anthony Froude (as he has lovingly promised me) takes precious charge in my stead." In his criticism of *The Nemesis of Froude*, Andrew Lang says, "I myself, under correction, understand these words to mean that Mr. Froude, as he himself tells us, was *already* the custodian of the documents."[2]

Miss Froude informs me that she remembers an entry in her diary of the year 1871 referring to these papers as being read and discussed. The diary has been, unfortunately, mislaid.

We may, then, safely accept Froude's statement—it was very unlikely that he would so soon after an important event

[1] *The Nemesis of Froude*, by Sir J. Crichton Browne and Alexander Carlyle, p. 82.

[2] *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol. XLIII., No. 253, "The Nemesis of Froude," by A. L.

have misremembered the year—that the papers relating to Mrs. Carlyle were taken to him by Carlyle in person in the summer of 1871. Froude's recollection was clear as to the date; Miss Froude supports it; the papers were lent by Froude to Forster, and Carlyle's will was made afterwards, in 1873, to meet Forster's suggestions; the words of the will indicate that the papers were then in Froude's possession; finally Carlyle's letter of 26th September, 1871, making reference to these papers, puts the matter beyond doubt.

Not long after he had signed his will, Carlyle realised that a biography of him would inevitably be written. He decided to entrust Froude with the task of forestalling any unauthorised production. At the close of the year 1873, or early in 1874, he sent Froude a large quantity of biography material, "a collection," said Froude, "overwhelming from its abundance." That these papers were sent to Froude before March 1874, at the latest, is proved by the fact that Mrs. Froude, who died in February of that year, made observations to her husband, which he remembered, on matters of personal interest to her, contained in the papers.[1] Additional material reached Froude at a later date, but he received the bulk of the biogaphy documents before March 1874.

Froude was to use this material entirely according to his discretion, it being understood and expected that he would employ it for the preparation of a biography. "Take them," Carlyle said, "and do what you can with them. All I say to you is, Burn freely. If you have any affection for me, the more you burn the better."[2] The habit of melodramatic expression led Carlyle to say more than he meant. If Froude had taken him at his word, and destroyed a large portion of the papers, we may be sure that Carlyle would have been disappointed and distressed.

After the death of Carlyle in 1881, Froude published, in the *Reminiscences*, the Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle, and the

[1] Letter of Sir James Stephen, *My Relations with Carlyle*, p. 53.
[2] *Carlyle's Life in London*, II., 443.

papers on Irving, Jeffrey, James Carlyle, Southey, and Wordsworth. In the Preface he said: "I told Mr. Carlyle that I thought that they ought to be printed with the requisite omissions immediately after his own death. He agreed with me that it should be so, and at one time it was proposed that the type should be set up while he was still alive, and could himself revise what he had written. He found, however, that the effort would be too much for him, and the reader has here before him Mr. Carlyle's own handiwork, but without his last touches, not edited by himself, not corrected by himself, perhaps most of it not intended for publication, and written down merely as an occupation, for his own private satisfaction. Nothing more remains to be said about these papers, save to repeat for clearness' sake, that they are published with Mr. Carlyle's consent, but without his supervision. The detailed responsibility is therefore entirely my own."

Nevertheless, Froude was assailed for having given effect to Carlyle's wishes. He was accused of treachery, whereas, if he had not published the *Reminiscences*, then, indeed, he would have betrayed the trust reposed in him. The attacks upon him came from the Carlyleans who disliked to see their hero exhibiting himself in an unenviable light. Froude had to suffer for the failings of Carlyle.

The *Reminiscences* were a shock to the world owing to the general misconception of the character of Carlyle. He was in the habit of bestowing praise and blame in the manner of a schoolmaster making his reports. This he did incessantly throughout his life, in his correspondence and his conversation. Even his dearest friends were alternately censured and patronised. Those outside the inner circle were liable to be assaulted in the roughest way. The acrid humour in Carlyle was unsuspected by the general public. When it was realised that he had human imperfections, the reaction was violent and excessive. The mealy-mouthed were offended, and laid violent hands on Froude.

Excuses have been brought forward on behalf of Carlyle. Garnett says, "The untruths, the injustices, the gratuitous

wounds throughout these unhappy volumes are too numerous to be overlooked, too flagrant to be forgiven were it not so certain that they arose from some cause independent of the writer's will, and that they were never given to the world with his consent." With regard to the consent, Garnett was misinformed. Even if there had been no consent, the untruths, injustices, and gratuitous wounds would remain.

The other explanation, said Garnett, was Carlyle's "mental state at the time." Some positive proof should be adduced to show that the mind was unhinged at the time. Garnett quoted Froude's statement that he never heard Carlyle "say a malicious word of any human being." But that shows that Froude saw nothing malicious in the *Reminiscences*. He did not suppose they needed any excuse. He wrote to Skelton, on the 7th April, 1881: "To me in no one of his writings does he" (Carlyle) "appear under a more beautiful aspect; and so, I am still convinced, will all mankind eventually think."[1]

An examination of the *Reminiscences* shows that the worst things are said about the people whom Mrs. Carlyle had disliked. Carlyle's loyalty to his wife's memory led him to attack with venom those who had, for one reason or another, offended her. Mrs. Irving, for instance, had incurred Mrs. Carlyle's displeasure by her marriage. We will invoke the testimony of an observant and sympathetic friend of her own sex. Mrs. Oliphant speaks of Mrs. Carlyle's "genuine feminine dislike of the woman who replaced her in Irving's life." Carlyle's remarks about her and her family, are, says Mrs. Oliphant, "disagreeable, painful, and fundamentally untrue"; they contain "an insinuation as completely and cruelly baseless as ever insinuation was."[2]

There is nothing in the *Reminiscences* which may not be matched in other writings of Carlyle. In a single volume of Froude's biography there are quotations from Carlyle's journal and correspondence in which he speaks,

[1] I. Skelton, *The Table Talk of Shirley*, 1895, p. 175.
[2] *Macmillan's Magazine*, April 1881.

in the bitter tone of the *Reminiscences*, of as many as eighteen of his acquaintances, some of them his closest friends. John Sterling, for instance, is "of endless semi-frothy utterance and argument" . . . "touchy and almost flimsy stuff." Montagu, who had tried to help him, is a "sovereign of quacks." An old college friend, Thomas Murray, is "worldly, egoistic, small, vain, a poor grub." Babbage is "a mixture of craven terror and venomous-looking vehemence; with no chin too—cross between a frog and a viper."[1] The *Reminiscences* are characteristic of Carlyle. There is no reason to suppose that their general tone would have been milder if they had been written before the death of his wife.

It is said that, in spite of the commission he gave to Froude, Carlyle did not really wish the Memoir of Mrs. Carlyle to be published. That he vacillated is likely enough, for it was his nature to avoid decisions and to shirk responsibility. His wife used to complain that he would not make up his mind about visits and holidays, leaving her uncertain of his intentions until the last moment; that she could make no plans ahead. So now he left it to Froude to decide what should be published.

His feelings of remorse were sincere, but his instinct for dramatic effect may have carried him farther than he had intended. He wished to make a fine gesture, and both desired, and also shrank from, the publicity which would be its chief merit. Froude thought that Carlyle was showing greatness of character, and Carlyle liked to think so too. If he had his feelings of reluctance, the one person to whom he could not bring himself to express them was Froude, whose admiration may have become embarrassing.

In some quarters Froude was attacked with a virulence that astonished him. It seemed incredible that he should be reviled as a traitor to Carlyle's memory. It was hard that Froude, who was one of the few real disciples of Carlyle, should have been accused of having intentionally

[1] For these and other examples, in the style of the *Reminiscences*, to be found in one volume of biographical material, see *Carlyle's Life in London*, by J. A. Froude, Vol. I., pp. 19, 32, 47, 57, 71, 78, 134, 137, 145, 148, 152, 163, 166, 198, 213, 324, 354, 374, 378, 434, 439.

falsified the evidence before him in order to indulge in feelings of jealousy and spite. In his biography of Carlyle, Froude accepted and applauded every word that Carlyle had written. He said that Carlyle was the most tender-hearted of men, quick with sympathy for suffering, and ready to devote time and money to alleviate it. And he declared that Carlyle loved his wife. All this was ignored, and he was accused of treachery for saying that Carlyle had been sometimes inconsiderate and thoughtless in his domestic life, blind to his wife's needs and selfish in his demands upon her—typical masculine failings which were far from uncommon in his day, and are not yet extinct. And yet Carlyle himself admitted his shortcomings, and gave Froude his papers in order that his apology should be published.

How moderate Froude was in his reference to the domestic situation may be judged from the following passages: "After his mother, he" (Carlyle) "loved his wife better than anyone in the world. He was only occupied, unperceiving, negligent; and when he *did* see that anything was wrong with her, he was at once the tenderest of husbands." Again, "Tender hearted and affectionate he was beyond all men whom I have known. His faults, which in his late remorse he exaggerated, as men of noblest natures are most apt to do. . . . There are many, perhaps the majority of us, who sin deeper every day of their lives in these very points in which Carlyle sinned, and without Carlyle's excuses, who do not know that they have anything to repent of."

Carlyle's brother James and his sister Mary (Mrs. Austin) took the part of Froude. James Carlyle wrote to him, 8th August, 1881, on behalf of himself and his sister Mary, imploring him not to give up the task of writing the life, and assuring him of their perfect reliance on him. This assurance was renewed on James Carlyle's part through his son after the appearance of Mrs. Carlyle's letters in 1883, and by Mrs. Austin through her daughter upon receiving the final volumes of the biography in 1884.[1]

[1] *The Life of J. A. Froude*, by Herbert Paul, 1905, p. 309.

Writing to Skelton, 11th September, 1881, Froude said, "I have had a most hearty letter from the one surviving brother in Annandale"; and on 14th April, 1883, "Mary Austin, one of Carlyle's sisters, has written me a most kind understanding letter."[1]

In self-defence, Froude reprinted in the Preface to the first volume of the biography Carlyle's own views on the duty of a biographer, introducing them in these words: "If I had studied my own comfort," said Froude, "or the pleasure of my immediate readers, I should have produced a portrait as agreeable and at least as faithful, as those of the favoured saints in the Catholic calendar. But it would have been a portrait without individuality—an ideal, or in other words, an 'idol,' to be worshipped one day and thrown away the next. Least of all men could such idolatrising be ventured with Carlyle, to whom untruth of any kind was abominable. If he was to be known at all, he chose to be known as he was, with his angularities, his sharp speeches, his special peculiarities, meritorious or unmeritorious, precisely as they had actually been."

Froude then gave a long quotation from Carlyle's essay on Scott, which is singularly *à propos*. We print part of it. "One thing we hear greatly blamed in Mr. Lockhart," wrote Carlyle, "that he has been too communicative, indiscreet, and has recorded much that ought to have lain suppressed. Persons are mentioned, and circumstances, not always of an ornamental sort. It would appear there is far less reticence than was looked for! Various persons, name and surname have 'received pain': nay the very Hero of the Biography is rendered unheroic; unornamental facts of him, and of those he had to do with, being set forth in plain English: hence 'personality,' 'indiscretion' or worse, 'sanctities of private life,' etc., etc. How delicate, decent is English Biography, bless its mealy mouth! A Damocles' sword of Respectability hangs forever over the poor English Life-Writer (as it does over poor English Life in general) and reduces him to the verge

[1] *The Table Talk of Shirley*, pp. 177, 182.

of paralysis. Thus it has been said 'there are no English lives worth reading except those of Players, who by the nature of the case have bidden Respectability good-day.' The English biographer has long felt that if in writing his Man's Biography, he wrote down anything that could by possibility offend any man, he had written wrong. The plain consequence was, that, properly speaking, no biography whatever could be produced. The poor biographer, having the fear not of God before his eyes, was obliged to retire as it were into vacuum; and write in the most melancholy, straightened manner with, only vacuum for a result. Vain that he wrote, and that we kept reading volume on volume; there was no biography, but some vague ghost of a biography, white, stainless; without feature or substance; vacuum, as we say, and wind and shadow,—which indeed the material of it was. . . .

"Perhaps, then, of all the praises copiously bestowed on his" (Lockhart's) "work, there is none in reality so creditable to him as this same censure, which has also been pretty copious. It is a censure better than a good many praises. He is found guilty of having said this and that; calculated not to be entirely pleasant to this man and that; in other words, calculated to give him and the thing he worked in a living set of features, not leave him vague, in the white beatified-ghost condition. Several men, as we hear, cry out, 'See, there is something written not entirely pleasant to me!' Good friend, it is pity; but who can help it? They that will crowd about bonfires may, sometimes very fairly get their beards singed; it is the price they pay for such illumination; natural twilight is safe and free to all. For our part, we hope all manner of biographies that are written in England will henceforth be written so. If it is fit that they be written otherwise, then it is still fitter that they be not written at all: to produce not things but ghosts of things can never be the duty of man.

"The other censure, of Scott being made unheroic, springs from the same stem; and is, perhaps, a still more wonderful flower of it. Your true hero must have no

features, but be white, stainless, an impersonal ghost-hero ! But connected with this, there is a hypothesis now current, due probably to some man of name, for its own force would not carry it far : That Mr. Lockhart at heart has a dislike to Scott, and has done his best in an underhand treacherous manner to dishero him ! Such hypothesis is actually current : he that has ears may hear it now and then. On which astonishing hypothesis, if a word must be said, it can only be an apology for silence, at first sight of the infinite. For if Mr. Lockhart is fairly chargeable with any radical defect, if on any side his insight entirely fails him, it seems even to be in this, that Scott is altogether lovely to him ; that Scott's greatness spreads out for him on all hands beyond reach of eye ; that his very faults become beautiful, his vulgar worldliness are solid prudences, proprieties ; and of his worth there is no measure."

We have only to change the names, to find that what was said of Lockhart was repeated, in every particular, against Froude. It is remarkable how close is this analogy. The words of Carlyle, written in 1838, are singularly relevant. They provide the answer to the attacks that have been made on Froude. If Froude's case could have been put before Carlyle, like that of Lockhart, there can be little doubt that he would have given an emphatic verdict in favour of the writer of one of the best and bravest biographies in the English language.

CHAPTER XXIX

1914

IF Carlyle had written a true account of the wars of Frederick the Great, the events of 1914 would not have come as a surprise. We should have perceived that 1756 was repeating itself.

The similarity between the Seven Years' War on the Continent and the recent conflagration, is so remarkable that the idea of accident, of fortuitous coincidence, cannot be entertained. The two wars must be regarded as evidence of similar results from similar causes. In their origin, their character, and the greater part of their course, they were one and the same conflict. The analogies are so close that they form part of the indictment concerning the responsibility for the war of 1914.

Frederick the Great was born in 1712, succeeded to the Prussian throne in 1740, and died in 1786. At the outset we come across similarities between him and the Hohenzollerns of our day. Frederick's mother was the daughter of George I; the ex-Emperor William's mother was the daughter of Victoria. Frederick was the grandson of the first Prussian King; William is the grandson of the first Prussian Emperor.

Frederick himself declared that his grandfather, by making himself a king, had left the seeds of ambition in his descendants. The grandfather of William, by making himself emperor, implanted the same ambitious seed in his grandson.

Frederick was the first Hohenzollern to be born a royal prince. He tried to goad his father into a war of aggression, but without success. The ex-Imperial Crown Prince William was the first Hohenzollern to be born an Imperial

prince. The efforts made by Prince William to arouse bellicose feelings in his father, the Emperor, remind one of the attitude of Prince Frederick (the Great) to his father, the King. Frederick described Frederick William I as " a man who does not wish to fight, but pretends that he is eager to do so." Frederick spoke of the " impetuosity of my temperament," which made him desire war and glory. He expressed the difference between the man who has been given an unexpectedly great inheritance and his son, whose ambition has been aroused but not satiated, when he remarked, " while prudence is very suitable for preserving what one possesses, boldness alone can make acquisitions."[1] This was precisely the tone of the ex-Imperial Crown Prince William to the ex-Emperor William and his Empire, to which the ex-Emperor had not been born.

It was to be expected, then, that the promotion of a Hohenzollern from king to emperor, as previously from elector to king, would have planted in the first prince to be born heir to the new dignity " the seeds of ambition," the desire to make a name, and the determination to push his father, if possible, into a war of conquest. On both occasions the son was eager, the father timid, but in the later case the father was unable to cast off his shining armour.

But in the twentieth century not even a Hohenzollern could lead Germany into a great war without the consent of the German nation. He could do much to encourage a belligerent atmosphere, but he could not create it unaided. The most remarkable of the revelations of August 1914 was the eagerness of Germany for war. All other peoples feared it. The German nation alone greeted the approaching conflict with acclamations of delight. To understand how such a situation can have arisen, we have to go back to Frederick the Great.

In Frederick's day there was no national feeling in Germany, and little even of local patriotism. Lessing, Schiller, Goethe, were international in sentiment. They thought more of mankind than of Germans. But

[1] Max Duncker, *Aus der Zeit Friedrich's des Grossen*, pp. 41, 42.

Napoleon's conquests aroused the national temper. Between Jena and Waterloo the spirit of a German nation was evolved, under the leadership of Prussia. The achievements of Frederick were recalled to stimulate patriotism and give confidence.

When, finally, the French armies were driven back, and Prussian soldiers camped in the Champs Élysées, what had been patriotic self-respect became boastful self-laudation. Prussian armies were declared to be impregnable in war. German professors announced that the culture of their nation was without a rival. Fichte, for instance, said that to the Germans alone " the seeds of human perfection have been intrusted." " If you succumb, humanity succumbs with you." Schelling announced that the " destiny of mankind rests with the Teuton, who alone can achieve supreme developments." This extravagance was repeated by Niebuhr, Ranke, von Sybel, Lassen. " Germany," it was asserted, " is morally and intellectually, beyond all comparison, superior to all other nations." That being so, Germany was bound to lead the rest of mankind, if necessary by force. Thus the future of human culture depended upon the strength of the Prussian army.

Carlyle joined in this indiscriminate panegyric. He made us accept the German belief in German superiority. His influence in this direction was enormous. As Froude said, it was " for many years almost unbounded "—at least with regard to Germany.

Then came, as appropriate sequel to Carlyle's book—his last volume being published in 1865—the Prussian triumphs of 1866 and 1870. The whole of Germany became infected with Prussian megalomania. Treitschke, whose lectures reminded his hearers of Carlyle, declared that foreign conquest was a moral duty ; that it was a criminal weakness in a State which has power, to refrain from exercising it ; that no Treaty, when no longer useful, can bind a State, or limit its Sovereignty. According to Nietzsche, the superman—Carlyle's " Hero "—should ruthlessly destroy all inferior beings. " The biological

necessity of war," to ensure " the survival of the fittest," was accepted as a fundamental principle.

At last there came, in 1914, the too long delayed opportunity for Germany to prove her superiority. The war was spoken of, in Carlyle's words, as " God's Judgment," or as a " Crusade " to spread German culture over the world, the task for which Germany had been appointed by Providence.

There would have been no eagerness for war in Germany but for the military prestige of Prussia, which was based principally upon the Frederick legend which Carlyle had helped to disseminate. No doubt Blücher and Moltke were remembered with satisfaction, but the name of Blücher recalled Prussian defeats at the hands of Napoleon, and Moltke's victories had been too easy to arouse the greatest enthusiasms. It was the fable of Frederick, surrounded by enemies, beating off their huge forces, defying the world, that gave Prussianised Germany the conviction that its army was unconquerable, that victory was certain.

These were the views which Carlyle spread over the world. Without them there would have been no world war.

The influence of Frederick the Great was plainly visible throughout the recent war. Frederick's first achievement was his capture of Silesia from Austria in 1741–2. The event bears the same relation to the Seven Years' War, which followed it, that the conquest of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870–1 does to the war of 1914. It increased Prussian arrogance ; it aroused a corresponding anxiety, and desire to unite in self-defence, among the other European States ; and it left Austria (like France after 1871) with a legitimate desire for revenge. Frederick was stimulated by his success to plan further acquisitions. He cast his eyes upon his small but rich neighbour, Saxony (Belgium in 1914), and awaited his opportunity. Meanwhile he brandished his sword in every face. He succeeded in bringing home to the rest of Europe the reality of the Prussian danger, just as William II did after him. Old

feuds were forgotten. France and Austria, hereditary enemies, began to make friends, while Russia and Austria drew together. The ex-Emperor William behaved in the same manner, and with the same result. France, Italy, England, Russia, laid aside old enmities ; they were brought together by the common danger to all.

The Colonial war between England and France gave Frederick the opportunity for which he was impatient. He made an alliance with England in 1756. France entered into a treaty with Austria, promising the assistance of 24,000 men if Austria was attacked. As he afterwards admitted, Frederick did not believe that France would honour her signature ; he spoke of the compact as " a mere treaty," like the " scrap of paper " mentioned with derision by the German Chancellor in 1914 when discussing, under similar circumstances, the English obligation towards Belgium.

Frederick's plan was to attack Austria in the late summer when it would be too late in the season for either France or Russia to interfere. He intended to march rapidly to Vienna (Paris in 1914) through the neutral small State of Saxony (Belgium). The German plan in 1914 was precisely the same ; an early success in the west was expected before Russia could intervene with effect.

By way of excuse for his attack, Frederick complained that Austria was bent upon the reconquest of Silesia (France and Alsace-Lorraine in 1914), and had formed an encircling coalition of enemies, whose threatening designs forced him to make ready to defend himself. He made this accusation in order to conceal his own intentions. The support given to this fraud by Carlyle gave a certain false respectability to the German assertion that Edward VII had organised the encirclement of Germany by armed and predatory enemies. If Carlyle had exposed the trick of 1756 it would not have had much success in 1914.

The excuses made in 1914 followed those of 1756. Frederick the Great issued a manifesto in which he said that he " has no offensive designs against the King of

Poland" (who was also Elector of Saxony) "nor against his Estates and that he does not enter them as an enemy, but solely for his own security; that he will make his troops maintain the strictest order and the severest discipline, and that though obliged to yield to the most pressing considerations, he awaits with impatience the happy hour when the same considerations will permit him to return to his Polish Majesty his Electoral Estates, held as a deposit which will always be acknowledged by him."[1]

In 1914 similar terms were used. On 2nd August the Note delivered by the German Minister in Brussels to the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs said: "Germany has no intention of any hostile act against Belgium. If Belgium is willing in the coming war to remain in benevolent neutrality towards Germany, the latter on her part will undertake at the conclusion of the war to guarantee Belgium's independence and possessions." The Imperial Chancellor declared in the Reichstag, 4th August, 1914; "Necessity knows no law. . . . The injustice" (to Belgium) "which we have committed in this manner we will repair when our military object has been attained." On 9th August he said: "Germany has not gone as an enemy into Belgium. . . . Germany asserts most solemnly that she has no intention to appropriate Belgian territory. Germany is always prepared to evacuate Belgium as soon as a state of war will permit her to do so." A succeeding German Chancellor said that Belgium was held as a pawn.

Similar declarations, when made by Frederick the Great, had received the approval of Carlyle. The resistance of Saxony in 1756 he called "ovine obstinacy." Germany was entitled to assume that he would have stigmatised the Belgian resistance in 1914 with the same epithet.

On entering Dresden, the Saxon capital, Frederick the Great broke into the archives, and pretended that he found there documents proving that Saxony had been in league with Austria to attack him—a baseless assertion. This precedent was followed exactly in 1914, when the archives at Brussels were searched and it was given out that proof

[1] *Preussische Staatsschriften*, III., p. 125

had been found of an agreement between England, France, and Belgium to attack Germany—another unfounded statement.

As Carlyle endorsed the actions and explanations of Frederick, it was legitimate to suppose that he would have approved the imitations of 1914. His name was invoked by the Germans during the war. The German Chancellor, Count Hertling, in a speech replying to the British Prime Minister, quoted Carlyle's approval of the Prussian annexation of Alsace-Lorraine in 1870–1. The ex-Emperor William ordered a translation of Carlyle's *Frederick* to be re-published during the war. He was supported by his reading of Carlyle in his belief that any success he might obtain would be evidence of divine recognition ; he said that he was " appointed by God " to conquer and annex.

There can be no international security, no solid peace in the world, while the Prussian, and Carlylean, conception exists of the State as Power, which can do no wrong in any act of aggrandisement that is successful. This doctrine inevitably influences the conduct of the citizens of the State in which it is current.

" The morality of the State," says a German writer, " naturally colours that of all who are in any way the supports of the State. Thus the heads of industrial undertakings think they can employ any means in order that their work may bear the richest fruit. They, equally with the State, declare that this is done not from self-interest, but from a feeling of responsibility towards the undertaking, from anxiety for the welfare of the portion of humanity committed to their charge."[1]

The Sovereignty of the State is a provincialism which cannot endure. It recalls the mediæval City-State and baronial castle, self-sufficient islands enclosed within walls and fortifications. After the fall of the Roman Empire at the hands of Gothic barbarians, and the decay of the Roman roads, the European world became a prey to bandits emerging from their fastnesses to harry their neighbours. That dark age of isolation has at last been overcome by

[1] *The Diary of Dr. Muehlon*, 1918, p. 137.

the Roman roads of our day, by railroads and telegraphs, and other devices for improving the means of communication. These developments have led to concentrations of power, to the growth of cities and great empires, where formerly had been scattered villages and petty principalities. We may be confident that this movement will continue, for the whole history of mankind is a record of the growth of the social instinct, the gradual recognition by the individual that some part of his freedom has to be abandoned for the sake of the community to which he belongs. Civilisation is a balance between the two essentials, freedom and discipline ; the higher the civilisation, the nearer will be the approximation to a perfect poise.

Reactions and disasters may occur. Barbarian incursions may break up an empire. But mankind will not submit to a permanent segregation of its units. The geographical obstacles—mountains and seas and deserts—are losing their efficacy. When Pekin, Moscow, London, and New York are so closely in touch that every movement by one is felt by all, association for mutual advantage will have become compulsory. The interdependence of peoples is already perceived. The world has become so sensitive to any interruption of exchanges such as war occasions, that so wanton an assault upon the welfare of mankind will, by mutual agreements and common sacrifices, be prevented from occurring. The communications and concentrations which are the mark of progress, and are visibly extending, are the surest preventives of war. Probably the first move will be to make the sea and the air, the world's great highways, which are open to all nations, permanently excluded from belligerent operations of any kind. International control of regions to which all nations have access presents no insuperable difficulty. Once the principle is established, it will be extended to the abolition of war on land. Society will assuredly triumph over its units. How soon the organisation will be created we cannot guess, but we may assert with confidence that the Sovereignty of States will not endure. The world

will find a way to control the nations of which it is composed.

It is remarkable how closely the Great War reproduced in its incidents the main features of the Seven Years' War. In 1756 the small Saxon army succeeded, before it was overcome, in delaying the Prussian advance until Austria had completed her preparations and the winter was at hand. The Saxon resistance ruined the Prussian plan, which required an early march to Vienna to dictate peace before Russia could make her force felt. This was just what occurred in 1914, when the Belgian resistance retarded the German advance. When Frederick the Great ultimately attacked the Austrians who stood between him and Vienna, his whole enterprise was wrecked by the severe reverse he sustained at the battle of Kolin. The battle of the Marne in 1914 furnishes an exact equivalent.

Over-confidence was the cause of the reverse in 1914 as in 1756. Some of the over-confidence which produced the second failure was due to Carlyle. Some of it was derived from the history of the Seven Years' War issued by the German Great General Staff. That official publication contained intentional mis-statements which in the end disturbed the judgment of the Staff itself. If the truth about the Seven Years' War had not been perverted by the General Staff, there would have been less arrogance in that Staff ; it would have been seen that the plan of 1914 might go the way of the plan of 1756.

There should never have been any doubt as to the German plan in 1914. Frederick the Great's strategy in 1756 made it probable that in 1914 the German army would advance through Belgium, with great rapidity, in a wide sweep, with a force whose size had been concealed by secretly strengthening the reserve corps. Every feature and detail of the operation in 1914 was what might have been expected if Frederick had been in command. At the battles of Prague, Kolin, Leuthen, Zorndorf, Kunersdorf, and Torgau, Frederick utilised the mobility of his army to march round the position of his stationary enemy and take him in flank.

In 1914, an advance to capture the Channel ports would not have been in accord with the ideas of Frederick, which were the expression of the Prussian conception of war. In his great turning march to reach the farthest Russian flank, at Zorndorf, Frederick passed close to the Russian camp and stores. He left them unmolested, though they would have been an easy prey, and their capture would have cut off the Russian army from its supplies.

The size of the striking force was concealed in 1756 (and also in 1870) by carrying *uebercomplette*—numbers in excess of the establishment. In 1914 the same result was obtained by " forming immediately a large number of reserve corps with a rapidity which the French had not expected."[1] In the official *History of the Great War*, Vol. I. (1922), we read : " The information at the disposal of the French General Staff appeared to indicate that the Germans had not sufficient troops to extend their front west of the Meuse." That information was spread by the Germans themselves in 1914, as in 1756, with the result that " there was no preparation against a wide enveloping movement." " The Germans turned the Allied left by an unexpectedly wide movement through Belgium."

Another feature of Frederick's tactics which was exhibited in the recent war was the local attack, followed by an early disengagement. The military correspondent of the *Morning Post* on the 1st June, 1918, supposed the enemy would " pursue the plan of alternating blows to which he has hitherto restricted himself." *The Times*, 6th September, 1918, remarked : " When the Germans started their series of offensives, they made the mistake of allowing us time between each two of them to recover our breath." The German plan was in the manner of Frederick, whose defeats at Kolin, Zorndorf, and Kunersdorf were due to the policy of piecemeal attack, the enemy being given time to repair breaches in his line, or to bring reinforcements to a point of danger from an unthreatened quarter.

[1] *Forty Days in* 1914, by Sir Frederick Maurice, p. 11.

If the genius and influence of Carlyle had made the world familiar with the diplomatic tricks of Frederick the Great, and with his military strategy and tactics, there would have been fewer surprises in the Great War. Possibly the war might have been avoided; certainly it would have been of shorter duration.

The further story of the Seven Years' War is suggestive and significant. It seemed that, the Prussian attack having been repulsed at Kolin, the victory of the largest numbers could not long be delayed. Frederick made great efforts to obtain a peace of some sort. He even pleaded the cause of humanity, deploring the sufferings produced by the war. This example also was followed by his successor after the battle of the Marne, the expressions used in 1915 being apparently copied from those of 1757.

Frederick's enemies lived in the constant expectation of a Prussian collapse; they began each campaign assuming it would be the last, owing to the supposed exhaustion of Prussian man-power, money, materials, and *morale*. Believing that time was on their side, they engaged upon "a war of attrition." In our case the war was prolonged by the very same mistaken optimism.

The German financial policy after the recent war was that of Frederick the Great, who was himself following the example of his ancestor Frederick William I, the Great Elector. During the Seven Years' War Frederick the Great debased the coinage, issuing thalers worth only one-third of their nominal value. When the conflict was over he issued a new coin, of full value, which was thenceforth the sole legal tender. The purchaser of a war thaler found that he could obtain for it only one-third of what he gave. Those who were acquainted with these facts did not buy marks in 1919.

The story of Russia in the recent war follows with remarkable closeness the precedent of the eighteenth century. To begin with, we have the ridiculous charge of "treachery" brought by the Emperor William against the Czar, the same word having been used by Frederick

the Great against the Czarina Elizabeth. On both occasions the "treachery" consisted in declining to become a Prussian tool.

In the Seven Years' War, as in the recent conflict, Russia abandoned her Allies. The Czarina Elizabeth died, and was succeeded by an idealist, the Czar Peter, who, like Lenin after him, made peace with the enemy of his country.

An observer in another planet would have watched the Great War with a smile of amusement, and of pity, for he had seen it all before, and could anticipate every event in the drama. He would have noted that it was the loyalty of England—a quality unique among nations, which has earned for her, from a bewildered and incredulous world, the title "*Perfide* Albion"—that saved Prussia in 1763, and France in 1918.

Out of his defeat in the Seven Years' War—for a defeat it was, the Prussian attack having failed—Frederick the Great contrived to create a legend of victory. It was proclaimed that the military genius and iron determination of Frederick, and the incomparable prowess of the Prussian army, had beaten off the attacks of the greater part of Europe. There was no truth in this story, but Carlyle accepted it. He spread far and wide the legend of Prussian military infallibility. Upon that great Prussian prestige was built the Prussianised German Empire; to it was due the German eagerness for war in 1914; by it Germany obtained Allies who believed they were joining the side whose victory was assured. Of all the causes of the war of 1914–18, the chief was the Prussian military renown, based to a great extent upon the undeserved reputation of Frederick the Great, which Carlyle had so large a share in disseminating.

When it was remarked to a German officer in Belgium that history would condemn the conduct of the invaders, he replied, "We will write the history." The conqueror's version is that which prevails. A Carthaginian account of the Punic Wars would doubtless reveal unsuspected facts. Who makes history, writes it; who writes history,

makes it. Carlyle was one of the men who by writing historical fiction has made historical fact.

The culpability of Carlyle cannot be explained away. In 1914 Germany could, and did, appeal to the authority of the man who had applauded in Frederick what they were then doing. While he encouraged Germany he blinded the rest of the world. If Carlyle, who was regarded as infallible on this matter, had shifted his weight from one side to the other, from the side of error to that of truth, we should have inherited a less incorrect view of the important facts. We should not have been completely unprepared for the events of 1914. The history of the world would have been different.

CHAPTER XXX

THE MAN AND HIS WORK

WE will recapitulate, and in some directions expand, what has been advanced.

One cannot read through the immense quantity of Carlyle's correspondence without acquiring sentiments of regard, even of love, for him. It may be that one would have similar feelings for any man whose letters were studied on a large scale. At least Carlyle succeeds in drawing out one's powers of sympathy and appreciation.

Carlyle's writings came from the heart ; there is in them more character than intellect ; to interpret them we must be conversant with his life. The man and his work have to be considered together. Like most gifted men, he had been, in his growing years, particularly sensitive to surroundings, responding quickly to the sights and sounds about him. When maturity had been reached the wood was exceptionally tough and resisting. He remained what he had become, and was impervious to further changes of contact.

Carlyle was born at the end of the eighteenth century, into a backward society of poor and illiterate persons. The first nineteen years of his life, between the 5th December, 1795, and the battle of Waterloo, had been a period of war, when the cruel, ruthless qualities of man had been allowed full sway. It was a brutal age ; fighting with bare knuckles was so common, among boys and men, that few indeed can have avoided using their fists at some period of their lives. The physical nature of man was dominant.

The Annandale peasants were good fighters, as a border people would naturally be. They were also religious,

fearing the jealous God of the Old Testament, who punishes the froward and sinful. They believed sincerely in the Devil and in Hell. Thus they were formed to fight or to pray. On the Scotch border, in Carlyle's day, the man who was ready with his fists, who had a rough tongue and an aggressive demeanour, and was also a regular attendant at kirk, was esteemed as well as feared. Carlyle's father and brothers were of this type. They were, he said, " noted for their brotherly affection and coherence, and for their hard sayings and hard strikings." They were fine, characteristic specimens of the Annandale peasantry, superior to most of their fellows in the qualities which were locally demanded.

Carlyle was too proud to fight; the influence of his mother, who disliked the pugnacity for which the Carlyles were famed, and his own superior education, gave him a contempt for the barbarism of fisticuffs. But he had the bullying spirit of the Carlyles, their rough speech, religious fervour, and family cohesion. He admired his father, comparing him to Burns, Johnson, and Wordsworth. He loved his mother as few mothers have been loved. He was devoted to his brothers and sisters, always ready with advice and assistance and brotherly affection. Included among the persons he approved were all those who could be regarded as cousins in the widest Scotch sense. There was a tradition in the family that they were " lineally " descended (in the male line) from the Barons Carlile. Thomas Carlyle was very proud of this supposed descent; the belief in it had a great influence upon the growth of his character. He imagined, as his ignorant and thoughtless neighbours did, that the persons in the direct male line of ancestors have a special potency in the transmission of qualities. All " blood " was held to come from this thin red line. Other ancestors, female and male, who were greatly preponderant in number, were ignored. Thus he obtained the conviction that he and his family were of different clay to their neighbours.

We have not yet acquired the ability to separate innate from acquired characters, and are obliged, in discussing

growth, to consider only the visible external factors. We know that Carlyle's father was noted for his dramatic and forcible sayings ; that he indulged in exaggeration ; that he was choleric ; and that his famous son exhibited the same features ; but to what extent they were inherited and to what extent acquired we cannot guess.

It is the mother, more than the father, who forms the characters of a family, owing to her daily and hourly contact with the children during the years in which tendencies are being developed and habits formed, which subsequent events may modify but cannot eradicate.

Carlyle's mother was very religious ; the only true Christian he had ever met, her son used to say in his extravagant way. She was a loving, self-sacrificing mother, always over-anxious about her children. They learned from her to talk much about health, and to ascribe their spiritual faults to physical ailments. From her and her religion they acquired the spirit which enjoined melancholy and humility, with suspicion of men and distrust of whatever seemed agreeable or attractive. With the humility went the common Scotch failing of pride. Carlyle's wife declared that her mother-in-law, " with a great show of humility " was " swallowed up in this sin." Mrs. Thomas Carlyle was not without pride herself, but the show of humility which went with it, in her mother-in-law, and her husband, was not one of her attributes. Some admirers of Carlyle were much impressed by his " proud humility."

Next in importance to the mother's influence is the position in the family. The eldest son has certain features, the second, the youngest, others ; an only son bears the marks of his solitude. We may not see them, but they are there. It is in childhood, when relative differences in age are so great, that the characteristic effects are indelibly fixed. A child aged four has had twice the experience of life, with its startling discoveries, that his brother aged two has had. The elder is far ahead, he can speak, walk, observe, in a manner that the younger cannot approach. Both of them are keenly conscious of this inequality ; which is further emphasised by the demeanour

of parents, nurses, and all persons who come into the society, who bestow a marked precedence upon the elder, which both the children accept as one of the great facts of their lives. The elder, from his maturer powers, is inevitably the leader, the initiator and discoverer, while the younger is the imitator. The elder thus acquires a sense of superiority, which tends to make him disdain all rivalry, and to regard his fellow creatures with a supercilious equanimity. He may learn to look down upon his world.

Carlyle was the eldest son of his mother, but John, the son of James by his first wife, was the prospective head of the family. Carlyle's mother was jealous of the first wife, and of the first wife's son. This feeling increased her natural tendency to bring forward, in fact, to spoil, her eldest son.

When the mother's darling went to school, exhibited there his sense of superiority, and held himself aloof from the occupations of his schoolfellows, they turned upon him and subjected him to persecution. The effect was to enhance his dislike and contempt for a world in which he was not appreciated ; to force him into himself ; and to make him long for public recognition. Thus, to the desire for excellence was added the wish to excel, the ambition which is not normal in eldest sons.

He was sent to Edinburgh University to be prepared for the ministry, because he was the eldest son. If the second son, Alick, had been the eldest, and Tom the second, Alick would have been the scholar and Tom the farmer. It was a natural ambition on the part of religious parents that their eldest son should be an educated man and a clergyman. Thenceforth he was received by his family and their friends, by the Ecclefechan society, as a being of superior attainments. In the vacations he found himself accepted in the domestic circle as an oracle.

To these two causes, his age-position in the family and his superior education, we may attribute his feeling that he did not belong to the world of men. His anti-gig talk, while he drove about in a gig, his call for silence, while his

own conversation was garrulous and overflowing are examples which show that he did not regard himself as part of society, a man among fellow men, but as one standing outside. "I was like no other," says Teufelsdröck. "I sit above it all; I am alone with the stars."

At the conclusion of the Arts course at Edinburgh, Carlyle was appointed mathematical master at his old school, at Annan. He felt lonely and dispirited. He expressed in letters to friends his intense yearning for literary fame, and his contempt for the whole race of mankind. The friendship of Irving, which began at this time, was of immense value to him. Irving had a school at Kirkcaldy, and Carlyle was glad to accept the mastership of another school there. But after two seasons he found that his pupils were leaving him; he was obliged to give up the profession of schoolmaster. He abandoned also the idea of the ministry. His pride would not let him enter any profession in which his prospects depended upon the favour and patronage of persons whom he despised.

In later years Carlyle said that it was at Kirkcaldy that, partly as the result of reading Gibbon, a change came over his religious opinions. He became unable to accept the miracles of the New Testament; but he retained the belief in predestination, in the daily interference of the Deity in the affairs of men, in the immortality of the elect, in some sort of hell for the wicked, in the impiety of the idea of progress, and the insolence of interrogating nature. His Bible was the Old Testament.

But he would not accept any label. When a visitor told him he agreed with his religious views, Carlyle turned upon him sharply: "*My* religious views! Who told you what my religious views are?" He would not allow himself to be classified, to be made to stand in a line with others. His intense egotism made him scorn the idea that any human being thought like him, or could understand him.

He told Sterling that he was "neither Pantheist, nor Pot-theist nor any Theist or Ist whatsoever, having the

most decided contempt for all such manner of system-builders or sect-founders." He wrote to Mrs. Aitken that "all the twaddling sects" claimed him, who belonged to "a sect of his own."[1] He was like the man who, on hearing a dispute, made the remark, "Some say it is, some say it is not, but if *I* were to give *my* opinion it would be different." The desire to be different is no better than the desire to be not different, than the cant and insincerity which Carlyle was so eager to denounce.

When asked what was her husband's religion, Mrs. Carlyle replied that she did not know. As Allingham noted, "Carlyle was contemptuous to those who held to the Christian dogmas; he was angry with those who gave them up."[2] Everybody was wrong except himself. He was different.

He and Irving went from Kirkcaldy to Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1818. He earned a small and precarious living by giving lessons to private pupils. He was paying his addresses at this time to an old pupil of Irving's at Kirkcaldy, Miss Margaret Gordon. In the autumn of 1819 Irving went to Glasgow as assistant to Dr. Chalmers, while Carlyle remained at Edinburgh, preparing for the profession of law. Without Irving he felt desolate and miserable, for Irving had led him into society. He found law uncongenial, and gave up the third profession he had entered upon. Margaret Gordon was instructed by her aunt to dismiss her lover, who was unable to provide for her and had no settled prospects.

This was a very unhappy time. Conscious of great gifts, and scornful of other men, Carlyle could not obtain the recognition he felt to be his due. His abilities had already been recognised. When he was only eighteen his college friend Murray prophesied that he would be famous. Miss Gordon declared that his genius would make him great. Irving told him he would be immortal. Jane Welsh, in her turn, wrote to him that nothing could prevent him from becoming one of the foremost men of

[1] *New Letters of Thomas Carlyle*, II., 86.
[2] William Allingham, *A Diary*, p. 254.

the day. When these predictions were made Carlyle had written nothing. His correspondence and conversation were so remarkable that those who knew him were confident that he would make a name.

In the meantime he was in a depressed condition. He wrote the gloomiest letters. Coupled now with the rancour against society were complaints of ill-health, of pain and indigestion, which interfered with work and made life miserable. His lamentations were so alarming that his family became very anxious about him, until he wrote saying that they should know him better, that when he called out Murder, he was not really being killed. But he had acquired the habit of complaint, encouraged by the example of his parents, and he continued it throughout life. If his mother had been stern we should never have heard of Carlyle's dyspepsia. Many a sensitive young man has suffered from abdominal troubles in periods of despondency. The essentially healthy and vigorous constitution of Carlyle is proved by his exceptional freedom from incapacitating indispositions ; by the absence of any serious illness at any time of his life ; by the great powers of physical and mental endurance which enabled him to put forth considerable exertion whenever he desired ; by the ability to withstand exposure to cold, damp, fatigue ; and by the attainment of a great age. Even friends and admirers admitted that his complaints were excessive and unmanly.

He was not a good sleeper, but his wife's testimony exposes the extravagances he indulged in on the subject. In one of her letters Mrs. Carlyle remarks that her husband had taken a turn at " waking up several times in the night—very dismal for him to whom waking betwixt lying down and getting up is a novelty." On another occasion she wrote to her husband that she had been " lying awake the whole nights through, not what you call ' awake,' that is dozing, but broad awake, like a hawk with an empty stomach." She said to Froude, " If Carlyle wakes once in a night he will complain of it for a week."

It pleased him to suppose that his humours were due

to his " fineness of organisation." He told Mill that when he spoke of his health, he meant his nerves ; he thought that " nerves " are evidence of a fine nature. Nervousness is usually the result of self-indulgence, of deficient self-control. To Emerson he said that his trouble was " weariness." His weariness was partly a northern melancholy, partly a religious affectation. Carlyle's complaints were boasts. His shrill cries gave the world an erroneous view of his physical condition.

Two events now occurred which opened new prospects. Irving obtained for him the appointment of tutor to the two elder sons of an Anglo-Indian, named Buller ; and he introduced his protégé to Miss Jane Welsh, only daughter of the late Dr. John Welsh. With the Bullers he entered a society of culture, wealth and fashion which had hitherto been outside his orbit ; and the interest which Miss Welsh showed in him gave him the hope of finding a permanent place in a sphere above that into which he had been born. Realising all this one day as he was walking in Edinburgh, he experienced the flush of exultation which he described in *Sartor Resartus* as a sudden spiritual conversion.

It may be questioned whether, but for Irving and Jane Welsh, Carlyle would ever have been heard of. If Irving had not rescued him from the Annan isolation he might have remained there in obscurity to the end of his days. The influence of Miss Welsh was necessary also. When he met her Carlyle had done nothing but a translation of a French book on chemistry, and a few encyclopædia articles. During the courtship Miss Welsh told him repeatedly that he would make no advance with her so long as he wasted his time and his talents. Under her influence he set himself to work. He wrote a *Life of Schiller*, and he translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*. To please his sweetheart as well as himself he sent copies of both works to Goethe. A regular correspondence ensued between the aged famous German and the young unknown Scotsman.

The Buller tutorship lasted for two years and a half, coming to an end in the summer of 1824, when Carlyle

and his pupils were in London. He remained there for a time, making the acquaintance of many people of note, introduced by the Bullers or by Irving, who had become a fashionable preacher at the Scotch Presbyterian Church. He was taken by Strachey, Mrs. Buller's brother-in-law, to Paris for a short visit.

In the spring of 1825 Carlyle returned from London to Scotland. After a pertinacious courtship carried on for five years and a half, chiefly by means of correspondence, he succeeded in inducing Miss Welsh to marry him. The wedding took place on the 17th October, 1826. His age was thirty, hers was twenty-five. They began their married life in a small house in Edinburgh.

After marriage, still urged on by Jane, Carlyle obtained from Mill, whom he had met in London, an introduction to Jeffrey, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. He called on Jeffrey, and the ultimate result was the appearance in the *Edinburgh Review*, June 1827, of Carlyle's first essay, on Richter.

It was at this time that Goethe, in conversation with Eckermann, described Carlyle as "a moral force of great significance," and that Jeffrey was telling him that he was "dreadfully in earnest." These sayings are often quoted. When they were expressed Carlyle had written nothing but the *Schiller*, the Introduction to his translation of *Wilhelm Meister*, and the article on Richter. Jeffrey was a new acquaintance, and Goethe a new correspondent. Carlyle had as yet shown very little of himself either to the public, to Jeffrey, or to Goethe. But his dramatic, fervid, manner had made an impression upon Jeffrey, and his praise of Goethe elicited a response from the German poet.

The introduction to the *Edinburgh Review* was the chief event in Carlyle's early career. After the article on Richter there followed a number of contributions to the chief periodicals. Sometimes as much as £50 was received for an article.

But Edinburgh was too expensive. In 1828 Carlyle went with his wife to live upon her estate, Craigenputtock, in a lonely part of Dumfriesshire. The housekeeping

expenses at Craigenputtock were small. The solitude was hurtful to Mrs. Carlyle, but it gave her husband freedom from distractions and irritations. There he did most of his best work; there he wrote the Essays, and *Sartor Resartus*.

He set himself to spread appreciation for Goethe, Schiller, Richter and other German writers, The origin of Carlyle's Germanism was its rarity. If the German language had been as familiar in Britain as the French, much of its attraction for him would have been lost, though he would still have preferred a victorious Protestant nation to a defeated Catholic nation. His own study of the German language came too late in life to make any radical change in his mental habits. At the age of twenty-three he knew no word of German. The mind and character cannot be transformed at that age. The Germanism of Carlyle was superficial; he never acquired the German mentality; he saw in the Germans only what was already in himself; all that he did was to put the language of Ecclefechan into capital letters and compound words.

He spoke often of the debt he owed to Goethe. In the most miserable period of his life, when he had been rejected by Margaret Gordon, and had lost the companionship of Irving; when he had abandoned first the church, then the school, then the law; when his literary efforts had not advanced beyond translations and encyclopædia articles; when he found himself unable to accept in its entirety the religion in which he had been reared; in this period of gloom verging on despair, Goethe's sanity helped him. It is well to remember, however, that Goethe coincided with Jane Welsh and the Bullers. It is also pertinent to observe that Carlyle misunderstood Goethe's views on happiness, on resignation, on reverence, on sorrow, on duty, on Christianity, on most subjects; that Carlyle saw in Goethe his own reflection. What Goethe did for him was to encourage his brotherly instincts; and to give the poor and unknown Scotsman a sense of communion, almost of equality, with the greatest literary figure of the day.

Carlyle's early life was a contest between, on the one

hand, his egotism, which was increased by the religion which taught him to despise the bulk of mankind ; and, on the other, his family affection, response to appreciation and sympathy with suffering. The better part of Carlyle was solaced first by Irving (" blessed conquest of a friend in this world ") then by the great Goethe, with his broad and generous spirit. That influence was strongest during the exchange of correspondence, from 1827 to the death of Goethe in 1832, in the early and happiest years of Carlyle's married life. At that time Carlyle was " the heartiest fellow in the world." His motto, derived from the German was " Time brings Roses."

The first railroad was opened for passenger traffic in England in the year 1825. Carlyle's first essay was published in 1827. His inclination was to oppose the tendency of the time, whatever it might be. He attacked machinery. He insisted that all things created by God are symbols of the Divine Spirit. The steam engine was not made by God. Carlyle raised his emotional voice to demand a dynamic spirit, not a utilitarian calculation of profit and loss. He spoke of the unseen world which lies behind appearances, and is the real life. He professed himself a mystic, one who has yearnings for the infinite and the inconceivable. He was, in fact, like his Annandale friend, Irving, a Revivalist, preaching the Kingdom of God.

The greatest events in the history of man are the discoveries he makes for communicating with his fellows. The machines which facilitate exchange of ideas are instruments for the furtherance of mutual understanding and co-operation. An engine is a propagator of brotherhood, a moral force. Before the steam and electricity of the nineteenth century had come, to enlarge society, moral force had little power. It was physical force that ruled. Mechanical inventions for assisting human intercourse have made moral force a far-reaching, living influence. How should Carlyle know anything of moral force, his early years coinciding with the Napoleonic wars, his youth having passed away before the railway era, brought up

as he had been to believe that the world is ruled by the big stick which God has put into the hands of His regents? The public opinion which he despised is an expression of moral force.

Among the noteworthy essays written at Craigenputtock were the studies of the characters of Richter, Burns, Goethe, Voltaire, Johnson, and Diderot. Carlyle's method differed from that of the reigning school of literary critics, of whom his friend Jeffery was one of the chief. They thought too much of the form, too little of the spirit. They considered the words more than the intention. The romantics, of whom Carlyle was one, sought the personality and character of an author as a clue to what was in his mind. "We have not read an author," said Carlyle, "till we have seen his object as he saw it." Incapable of moderation, Carlyle carried the principle to the extent of neglecting a writer's work, devoting himself almost exclusively to the author's appearance, manner, and everyday life. "Man," he exclaims, "it is not thy works; but the spirit that thou worketh in, that can have worth or continuance." With his graphic and vivid style he reveals human beings, where previously had been abstractions or incredibilities. His portraits have taken permanent hold of the imagination, like a Holbein or a Velazquez. Whether these pictures, which still hang on our walls, exhibit the real men, is not so sure. The most elaborate of them all presents a Frederick the Great who never existed.

The spirit of a great man, said Carlyle, is immortal, but his work is ephemeral. With these views, it is not surprising that his literary criticism, when it came, should have been worth little. His judgments of Keats, Lamb, Jane Austen, Shelley, and other supreme artists, are negligible. He thought Falstaff "no picture of a man at all—merely a stage caricature to make people laugh." His praise was as inappropriate as his criticism was inept. He described "Fear no more the heat of the sun" as "one of the prettiest things ever written. It is like the distant tinkle of evening bells."

In these biographical essays Carlyle insisted upon the

great truth that the brain cannot work if the heart is disturbed by affectation, jealousy, vanity, hatred. Richter's humour was "the purest effluence of a deep, fine and loving nature." Burns had a "kind and warm soul"; he was sympathetic and sincere. Boswell's book is the best of its kind, because it was inspired by love and reverence. The secret of being graphic is to have an open loving heart.

There is a path to greatness which lies open to all men. It is the way of sincerity and love. Those, be they famous or obscure, who walk that road are the rare spirits of our race.

In the year 1831 Carlyle went to London with his most characteristic work, *Sartor Resartus*, in his pocket, hoping to find a publisher; but the book was too uncouth and extraordinary, and it was returned on his hands. Ultimately Fraser printed it in his magazine, in eight parts.

In the solitude of Craigenputtock Carlyle fancied that the ideas that came to him had never before entered the mind of man. He imagined that the doctrine of the "natural supernatural"—that it is a miracle that a man can move his arm—was a discovery of his own, of immense importance to the world. No man, he said, for eighteen hundred years, had been charged with a message of such vital import to deliver. "Whence! and Oh, Heaven, Whither?" he asked, but could give no answer. The only conclusion he could come to was that we should be reverent and humble and trust in God. Duty compels us to work at whatever comes nearest to hand, making the daily occupations our America. The book was an emotional description of Carlyle's life and feelings.

Meanwhile he and his wife were making friends in London. They enjoyed their visit and returned unwillingly to their dreary solitude, in 1832.

After the London experience of cultured, friendly society, Mrs. Carlyle found Craigenputtock more and more depressing. All her hopes appeared destined to be disappointed. It seemed that her husband's abilities were never to receive

recognition, and that the whole of her life was to be spent in narrow circumstances on a lonely farm. She was relieved when Carlyle decided to invade London, with £200 in his pocket; to take a house and try to obtain a permanent position there. The move was made to No. 5, now 24, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, in June 1834. They had been married eight years, and there were no children.

As yet Carlyle was known only to a small and appreciative circle of literary people as a writer on German subjects, and a correspondent of Goethe; the best of his literary essays were admired, and his "Signs of the Times" and "Characteristics" had interested thoughtful people. But a popular success was essential to enable him to continue his career. He left the abstractions of Craigenputtock for the material world of London. He found at last the vehicle for the display of his powers. What he could do was to produce a dramatic version of a great historical event. For that purpose no better subject could have been selected than the French Revolution.

He regarded that convulsion as a punishment for sin. He begins with a dramatic death scene. Louis XV is dying, and the deluge is approaching. In every part of the story the reader feels the presence of God and His active control over events. The people are inspired by God to rise against their oppressors and wreak vengeance upon them. There is now no question of time bringing roses. The real God of Carlyle, now that Goethe is dead, is a just and jealous God, an inexorable Judge, who punishes the children for the sins of their fathers. The history is incorrect; and theatrical episodes are preferred to events of greater intrinsic importance; but the scenes are vivid, with flashes of lightning and crackling of thunder.

There were some disquieting tendencies which had grave developments later on. In the *French Revolution* Carlyle applied the principles which he had learned in the primitive society of Ecclefechan, to the history of mankind during a great political upheaval. His own practical experience of men was not extensive, his knowledge of human nature was not profound. He taught what he had been taught

that, inasmuch as God directs all human actions, success is proof of Divine sanction. Therefore, Carlyle applauded all the violence and the fraud which escaped immediate punishment. When Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette were guillotined, and the poor little Dauphin died of solitary confinement, Carlyle remarked coldly that "the loser pays." For the September Massacres, perhaps the most horrible event known to civilisation, he made excuses, pleading that a Law of Revolution justifies murder on a large scale, a principle which Bolshevists accept with alacrity.

The book was not published until July 1837, three years after the move to London. In spite of Mrs. Carlyle's rigid economy, finances had fallen very low. Something had to be done. Influential friends arranged for lectures, and collected fashionable audiences to hear the gifted Scot with his strange accent. The lectures were delivered in 1837, 1838, 1839 and 1840. They were discontinued when the public began to buy Carlyle's books.

The last lectures were published in book form, with the attractive title, *On Heroes, Hero-worship and the Heroic in History.* Great men, said Carlyle, in the spirit of the Old Testament, are sent by God, and should be accepted with gratitude as the ordained leaders of mankind. That was also, in Carlyle's day, the working doctrine of the schoolmaster. Any attempt of a pupil to think for himself was obnoxious, and to be suppressed. Conceit, whether in the form of noisy self-assertion or of quiet self-complacence, was hateful to the parson schoolmaster in Carlyle.

It is very necessary that we should reverence great men, and be thankful for the help they bring and the comfort of their presence among us. But the Hero-worship of Carlyle was a kind of slavery ; it stifled the mind ; it bred snobbishness and sycophancy.

By this time Carlyle had become one of the foremost figures of the day, at least in intellectual and fashionable quarters. Great ladies asked him to their houses. They had constituted the greater part of his lecture audiences

and were, throughout his career, his chief admirers. In response to this feminine appreciation Carlyle was tempted to show himself strong and masterful, to denounce the follies of mankind, and indulge in awesome prophecies of impending disasters.

This was much more telling than the vague optimism of his earlier manner. The melancholy tone, the pose of deep knowledge, of having plumbed depths which only a genius could reach, gave thrills of appreciation. The speaker seemed to be revealing the whole truth, explaining the mysteries of life. The confidence, and the obscurity, helped to mesmerise the audience.

Denunciation of the errors of the day, with predictions of calamity, seldom fail to attract attention. The warning prophet seems a deep thinker ; one who has probed into realities ; unlike the thoughtless optimist, who is devoid of perception and understanding. Carlyle said of Irving that he was sanguine because he saw nothing " in its severe reality." He said also—and this has more truth in it—that it is easier to see faults than merits. The wise and happy man who is able to perceive the good that exists in this wonderful and beautiful world, with its splendid men and women, does not expect to be followed about by troops of admirers. Appreciation of what is good is just as essential, if there is to be any real understanding, as perception of what is bad.

The effect of the adulation he received was to stimulate in Carlyle his natural arrogance. He became rude and overbearing, a licensed bully. Fame was doing for him what he declared it had done for his fellow countrymen, Burns and Irving.

The influence of woman-power upon history awaits its recorder. The growth of a man, his developed character, his life from childhood to the grave, are largely woman's handiwork. Carlyle's mother made him a spoilt child crying for the moon, expecting everything to be done for him ; she taught him to consider himself, at an early age, a being apart. Then came Jane Welsh. It was her influence that spurred him to write ; but her " Edinburgh

style of mockery " was a bad example. If she had been a mild serene woman, much of Carlyle's bitterness would have been exorcised. If she had reared a family, there would have been no far-flung tales of discords in the household. Then the applause of women, beginning with the lecture audiences, helped Carlyle to rise ; and their flattery brought about his fall. These feminine influences were decisive upon his character, life, and career. With a different mother and wife, and no sirens, he would have been a different man.

In the days of his obscurity Carlyle expressed repeatedly his determination to speak the truth, in spite of all temptations ; his assurance that fame (which was overdue) would not spoil him ; and his resolve to endure his physical torments in heroic silence. To explain how completely he failed in all these directions, we need only refer to his own doctrine that whoever prides himself on the possession of a virtue has already lost it. He had no care or concern for actual truth ; he used the word to indicate whatever satisfied his personal conscience ; he spoke truth if he expressed what was in his mind. For the Goddess herself his feeling was fear rather than love. As for fame, Carlyle's defiance was so noisy and theatrical that it exposed his eager desire. And his complaints of ill-health were accompanied by repeated asseverations that he would not complain. He took care that everybody should know that nobody knew what he suffered in silence. In his poses towards truth, fame, and ill-health, Carlyle was a Sham.

The next book, *Past and Present*, published in 1843, was an enlargement of the tract *Chartism*, published in 1839. The subject was the position of labour, which Carlyle called " The-Condition-of-England Question." He said that since the introduction of machinery, the workmen had lost their position as members of a society in which they could rely upon the guidance and protection of their superiors. They had become " hands " who were dismissed when the employer had no longer any need for their services. Carlyle advocated permanent employment, which

he considered to have been one of the great merits of the feudal system. He supposed that the employer could be compelled to pay, and the workmen could be forced to work. It never occurred to him that the " hands " would be able to dictate to the " Captains of industry " and would give only such amount of work as they might agree upon among themselves ; that the permanence would be against the master and not binding upon the servant. He could not foresee such developments. In his view the poor had no desire but to be directed and controlled by beings superior to themselves. Their natural leaders were, he said, the landed aristocracy.

He advocated general education, state-aided emigration, and state interference to obtain better conditions for the work-people. He attacked the prevailing doctrines of *laissez-faire*, supply-and-demand, and what he called the cash-nexus. He said that an employer's duty does not end with the payment of a weekly wage, that the workman has a soul as well as a body. His eloquent and touching appeal on behalf of the poor man awakened a response among sympathetic people. Lockhart said, what many readers have felt, that Carlyle had made him " conscious of life and feeling as he had never been before."

There was no suggestion that the hours of work should be reduced. Believing in work, Carlyle confined his support to the " honest willing worker," the " eager working men." He was opposed to the policy of giving doles to the unemployed, on the ground that it was unfair to the workman who made no complaint of his hours, and preferred, from motives of self-respect, to give more, rather than less, work than he had promised.

Laborare est orare, said Carlyle, work is worship. His praise of work as something in itself noble, will, let us hope, be long remembered. But he spoilt it by declaring that all good work is, and should be, painful. His friend and admirer, Ruskin, held that work should be pleasure. Carlyle's mistaken idea was derived from the Old Testament, from which he had not the ability to free himself. Although Ruskin had been made to read the Bible in his

youth even more assiduously than Carlyle, he was still able to use his mind. He cast off the doctrine which they had both been taught, and Carlyle was unable to discard, that work is a discipline prescribed by God as a punishment for sin.

The title *Past and Present*, and the vivid presentation Carlyle gave of the life of an abbot and his monks in the twelfth century, illustrate his consciousness of the continuity of life. Those who have gone before, in their countless millions, were real living beings like ourselves; we remain in their world; they are part of our existence; without them we should not be. We are all links in a chain, leaning on the past, supporting the future.

In 1845 appeared *The Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell*, with "elucidations." These "authentic utterances" sufficed to disprove the extravagant charges of dishonesty and ambition which had been brought against Cromwell. In this book the doctrine "*Vae Victis*" was the dominant theme. Cromwell was an armed soldier executing God's judgments on the enemies of God.

Having established the principle that God is Great and that Cromwell was His Prophet, Carlyle remained free to indulge his taste for portraiture and gossip. He imagined that, when he had shown that Cromwell was an honest man, he had said all that need be related of the Puritan Revolution. He declined to give adequate consideration to the political and religious controversies of the time, preferring to dwell upon the magnificence of "His Highness" and the grandeur of the Lords and Ladies of his family.

The arrogance of Carlyle had reached its height. There was now a boasting about labours which were far from exceptional, and a pose of conscientious editing while the text was being maltreated. There were charges against previous editors of having provided no indexes, which were in fact provided. A painstaking predecessor, the Rev. Mark Noble, was accused of having made no mention of certain persons, whose names with several pages of particulars, were, in fact, duly chronicled. It was characteristic

of a licensed bully that he should repeatedly express his contempt for Noble, who was a far more accurate man than himself, and from whom he obtained much of his material.

Has there ever been a writer of note who combined denunciation of puffery with so much self-laudation? The public was told repeatedly by Carlyle himself that he had performed Herculean feats, wading through Stygian quagmires, or exploring arid regions which had never before been trod by human foot. From that time to this Carlyle has been regarded as the supreme example of the pious editor, exact in quotation, conscientious in translation—the industrious labourer searching for facts. He gave himself that character, and the advertisement caught the public eye. No man who has in him the spirit of research would either complain of his work, or draw attention to it. Carlyle's boasts were unjustified. Much of the tedious work was done for him by an assistant who went to the British Museum to copy documents. The transcripts brought him he treated in the most cavalier fashion, altering not only the speeches but even the letters.

He fastened upon dates and names, and imagined he was very accurate and painstaking. He was inclined to believe that he knew all about an event when he had discovered on what day of the week it had occurred.

An illustration of his feeling for names is to be found in his pencil notes in the London Library copy of the second volume of Raumer's *Contributions to Modern History*. On page 396 the word "Buckingham" is overlined by Carlyle, prefixed by "Lord," and extended by "shire!" On page 397, "*shire*" is again added to Buckingham. On page 418, "Buckingham" is again overlined, and in the margin is written "(second Earl of Buckingham*shire*, Hobart his name)." But the Buckingham despatches in the Record Office and the Buckingham correspondence in the British Museum, which provide important information concerning Frederick the Great and Prussian diplomacy, were ignored by Carlyle. His researches ended when he had learned what was *Lord* Buckingham*shire's* surname.

Then there was the levity with which he accepted the egregious Squire forgeries, without applying to them the most obvious and compulsory tests. His failure to detect the fraud suggests that he did not rightly understand Cromwell. His portrait of Cromwell may not be more reliable than his presentation of Frederick the Great.

The slightest suggestions of doubt aroused loud-voiced threatenings. Carlyle had lost all sense of responsibility to the public, and with it went sobriety and self-control. When Emerson came to London, he found a man very different from the recluse of Craigenputtock. He declared that Carlyle had become "fierce and savage," and, when he was asked to give an introduction to the prophet, he enquired why the applicant should wish to have *aqua fortis* poured over him.

In this inflamed period there were distresses in Cheyne Row. The death of Mrs. Welsh brought to Carlyle, through his wife, the estate of Craigenputtock. He was now a landed proprietor. The situation was not altogether gratifying to his wife. Mrs. Carlyle found herself sometimes omitted from her husband's invitations to fashionable houses. She made her way in the end, but in the early stages of the extraordinary social progress of this remarkable couple it was her husband who entered the sanctuaries, while she remained at home. This was a very unexpected and disagreeable change in their relative positions, for when they married it had been understood that Miss Welsh was of superior birth to her husband; that she was raising him to her level. Now she was regarded as a domestic convenience, an appanage of the great Mr. Carlyle's, a "circumstance in his lot," whilst he boasted of his noble descent, talked of his Scotch estate, and became intimate with great ladies into whose society his wife was not asked to enter. She had serious thoughts of leaving him. Some years later, when she reminded him of this, he told her that he would not have missed her, as he had been very busy with his *Cromwell* at the time—a remark which Mrs. Carlyle felt deeply.

Received among the fashionable women and the foremost men of the day as one divinely inspired, Carlyle, like Irving before him, was convinced that he had been given a special mission to instruct and admonish the world. He began to think of a political career. As a candidate for public office he expressed, in *Latter-day Pamphlets*, his political creed, which was derived from what he had learned in the primitive surroundings of his impressionable youth.

In the Middle Ages it was held that each man is born into a fixed position. Slaves, said Carlyle, were intended to be slaves. Gurth was the " born thrall " of Cedric. Nobles are " born lords " of their servants, " born wiser " than they. Inferiors should submit themselves to be " governed," with a whip if necessary, by their superiors.

On this theme Carlyle worked himself into a ferocious temper, which banished all humane feelings. The ideas constituted the greater part of his message to the world ; the expression of them had become callous and brutal. The pamphlets were received with public astonishment and dislike, which Carlyle was prepared to accept with equanimity ; but when personal friends fell away, and he met with signs of disapproval in influential circles, he realised that he had gone too far. The death of Peel, upon whom had rested his hopes of office, made him give up all idea of a political career.

To recover his reputation, he turned to the memory of his sweet-natured young admirer, John Sterling, and produced a kindly and sympathetic biography, in keeping with the gentle spirit of his lost friend.

The domestic situation was not improved by the temper worked up over the *Latter-day Pamphlets* and the falling away of friends. Mrs. Carlyle had ground for dissatisfaction with her husband's intimacy with Lady Ashburton ; and she had come to a trying age. There were the usual failings on both sides. Carlyle regarded his wife as a possession, a chattel, an attitude not so uncommon in his day as in ours. " With three women in the house," he expected that his wants should be satisfied. He had,

in full measure, the characteristic man's fault of self-absorption, of inattention to his wife's needs. It was typical that when she was ill, suffering torments, he should have written to her that if she were not in such pain he would tell her of his own ailments, and then should proceed to do so immediately. Mrs. Carlyle, for her part, was an admirable wife in many respects, sympathetic and helpful, never sparing herself; but she had a short temper and a sharp tongue, and she was not always loyal to her husband. The stories she told against him overstepped sometimes the limits of playful banter. She had been an only child, spoilt by her parents, while he also had been spoilt by his mother. Thus they had both acquired the habit of complaining, and they infected each other.

No children came to give the woman her natural occupation, and the man lived all day in the house, absorbed in his work, oblivious of his wife's presence. "When my husband is at work," said Mrs. Carlyle, "I hardly ever see his face from breakfast to dinner." There are no similar grumbles when the man is out all day at an office. The troubles that arose in the Cheyne Row household were due as much to the ailments common to mankind as to the sensitiveness of genius. The Carlyles were as happy together as their fellows in the like situation.

About all his contemporaries Carlyle made unpleasant remarks. His wife joined him in criticising each visitor as soon as he had left their presence, a procedure which those who remained could not fail to perceive would be directed against them in their turn. Froude said that Carlyle was never malicious, but the recipient of a blow does not feel it the less if there is no malice behind it.

This habit of ultra-candid criticism would have left most men without any friends at all, and yet people of character still came to Cheyne Row. Beneath the roughness they had discovered a sympathetic, affectionate nature, which craved for appreciation, and returned it, when given, in full measure. Carlyle made many real friends. After his college chums—Murray, Mitchell, Johnstone, Ferguson—came Irving and Jeffrey, Emerson and

Mill, Sterling and Milnes. Then the *French Revolution* brought floods of visitors, eager to grasp his hand. If we were to name all who became either intimate friends or personal admirers, we should have to compile a list, with few omissions, of the notabilities of the period, and to add a large number and considerable variety of lesser people. With his noble gift of friendship Carlyle was indeed a happy man.

Some came to see Mrs. Carlyle rather than her husband. But while Mrs. Carlyle's visitors were captivated, Carlyle's friends were grappled to his soul. They could say, with Browning, that Carlyle's love had enriched their lives.

We have seen Carlyle, at the age of seventeen, helping a friend in difficulties. In the Craigenputtock days, on the 11th December, 1828, he was writing to De Quincey : " Two well wishers of yours are still alive in these remote moors, and often thinking of you with the old friendly feelings. . . . Your presence at this fireside will diffuse no ordinary gladness over all members of the household ; our warmest welcome, and such solacements as even the desert does not refuse, are at any time and at all times in store for one we love so well. . . . Come, therefore, come and see us, for we often long after you. . . . Believe it, you are well loved here."[1] We may take another example, out of many, nearly forty years later, in a letter to Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes), 11th August, 1864 : " May the waters of Vichy do you good ! May you be happy and merry, dear old friend, for many years to come."[2]

In cultured society Carlyle was extraordinary and surprising. As Tieck noticed, he made a display of his rude origin. " Coming back to the society of Carlyle after the dons at Oxford," said Lady Ashburton, " is like returning from the conventional world to the human race."[3] Sir Henry Taylor found Carlyle " a striking element of the wild and grotesque to mix

[1] R. H. Shepherd, *Memoirs of Thomas Carlyle*, Vol. I., p. 60.
[2] *Life, Letters, and Friendships of Richard Monckton Milnes*, by T. Wemyss Reid, Vol. II., p. 128.
[3] Espinasse, *Literary Recollections*, p. 102,

up with the more gay and graceful material of a fashionable set."[1] Froude speaks of "the novelty of Carlyle's mode of speech, his singularly original humour and imagery," and "the impressiveness of his personal presence."[2]

In the opinion of his friends, sympathy with suffering was the cardinal feature of Carlyle's character. Women, especially, felt, with Mrs. Browning, that "all the bitterness is love with the point reversed." Mrs. Oliphant instanced his habit of ending some violent diatribe with "an abrupt outburst of that broken laugh which is so often only another form of weeping." Miss Martineau said that "excess of sympathy" was the "master pain of his life"; his "savageness" was the expression of an "intolerable sympathy with suffering." Froude was of the same opinion.

Young people who came to Carlyle for assistance in their careers generally received a kind and helpful response. But the slightest hint of self-assertion was fatal to the applicant. An unlucky clergyman sent Carlyle a voluminous manuscript; when he had read a few sentences Carlyle put it into the fire. Mrs. Carlyle told her husband that she pitied the poor man who had taken so much trouble in vain. But he laughed. "They will send me such things, but they cannot make me read them."[3]

Carlyle's sympathy was easily aroused in individual cases, but on the condition that no rival sympathiser intervened, and that the applicant himself made no pretence of equality.

When he was poor and unknown, Carlyle's heroes had been men of humble origin—Burns and Richter, for example. As his own standing improved he advanced to Cromwell, the country squire. Finally, he adopted the tone of the aristocratic circles in which he moved and had his being, and paid homage to Royalty. He embarked upon a large-scale biography of Frederick the Great, who

[1] Sir H. Taylor, *Autobiography*, p. 330.
[2] J. A. Froude, *Carlyle's Life in London*, Vol. I., p. 316.
[3] "Conversations with Carlyle," *Contemporary Review*, June 1881, by W. Knighton.

had the supreme attributes of being a Teuton, a Warrior, and a King.

The central theme of *The Life of Frederick the Great* was the doctrine which Carlyle had been propounding ever since he came to London, that "Might is Right." He said that what he meant was that Right makes Might, that Justice gives Strength, that Truth will prevail in the long run. Give a thing time, he said; if it endures it is a good thing. But in practice he would not wait for the long run; he would not give the necessary time. He accepted each success as it occurred, in accord with the barbarian creed which he had learned in the Ecclefechan society—that immediate triumph is the test of merit. Whenever he saw a man standing over the prostrate form of a defeated enemy—as his father and uncles had done so often—he assumed that the victor had been in the right. So he applauded the violence and fraud of Frederick the Great, believing that the gains were permanent. If Carlyle were alive now, he would not spend thirteen years of his life in praising a man whose success has not endured in the long run.

But, in spite of his principles, Carlyle felt little affection for Frederick; and he soon perceived that he was trying, as Mrs. Carlyle said, to make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. He was distracted by the conflict between his belief that the end justifies the means and his natural dislike of the means adopted by his hero. The further he went the more disturbed did he become. But he had now his own personal reputation to consider. Rather than admit his mistake publicly, he went on with hardihood, employing—thereby deceiving himself—incorrect translations, excisions of important passages, and pitiful sophistry. As Emerson told him, he had made a contract with himself to see only what he desired to see.

The practical effect of Carlyle's praise of one of the worst men known to history came home to us in the terrible years of the Great War. Carlyle must be accounted one of the authors of that catastrophe. Here, at least, he led opinion and made history.

Thus it comes that we cannot accord to Carlyle the wholly favourable consideration that would have been his if he had never left Scotland. One who knew him both before and after he had become famous said, "The simple-hearted dreamer, who came up from Craigenputtock to London, full of Novalis, Jean Paul and Goethe, was a far more interesting and agreeable person than the Sage of Chelsea." The mystic had become an exponent of *Real-politik*. The Craigenputtock spiritualist was transformed into a Cheyne Row materialist. Love was thrown aside for Power.

We may divide Carlyle's life into three periods. The first ends when the Annan schoolmaster was pulled out of the mire by Irving. Till then Carlyle had felt himself an outcast. He had risen from the class which he likened to carrion and offal; he was not admitted to the region inhabited by bucks and boobies. In the second period Carlyle found himself, thanks to the introductions of Irving, an appreciated member of a cultured society. His abilities recognised, his character admired, by those whose good opinion was worth having, a loved wife by his side, he responded from the depths of his heart. Human sympathy breathes through his early work. The third period began when he emerged from obscurity to fame. Excited by the flatteries of the sirens of fashion, he displayed himself further for their admiration as the masterful, awesome, inspired Seer and Prophet. He had made the same progress that is often seen among politicians. The ambitious Radical, full of sympathy for the down-trodden society of which he is a member, becomes a Tory when he has himself reached a satisfactory position.

When one remembers that he wrote, as he talked, at random, contradicting himself swiftly, without perceiving it or caring[1]; that many of his confident assertions were inspired by opposition to the last remark he had heard, by dislike of any opinion that was common, by fear of becoming

[1] "Carlyle admired an address to the electors of France when, learning that it was by George Sand, he just as warmly condemned it" (Espinasse, *Literary Recollections*, p. 171).

associated with fools—for he abandoned views that he had forced upon the public as soon as he found they were generally accepted; that he merely repeated, or exaggerated, what he had learned in his youth at

The Two Carlyles.

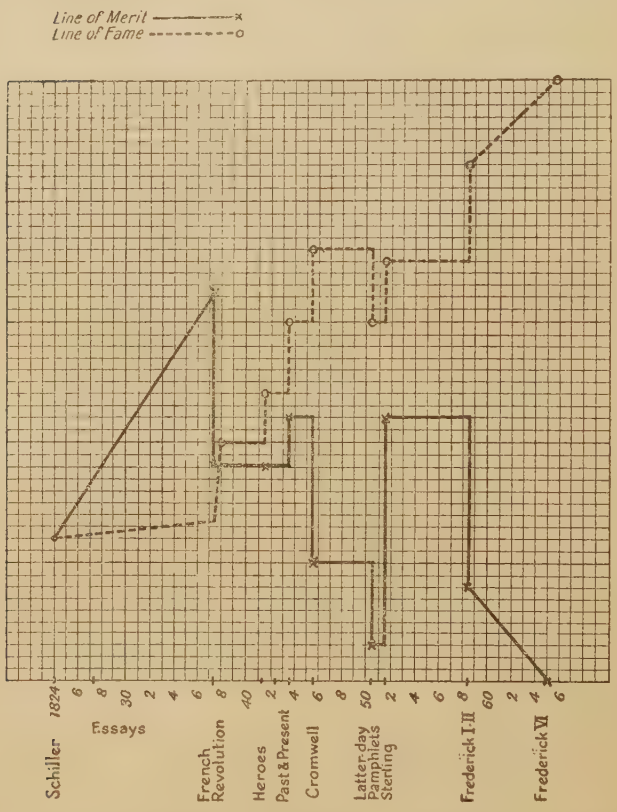

DIAGRAM TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIVERGENCE BETWEEN CARLYLE'S FAME AND HIS MERIT

Ecclefechan, the reputation he obtained for profundity and wisdom is one of the curiosities of history.

His merit fell as his fame rose. The above diagram illustrates the divergence between the two.

He was a mediæval peasant, full of the superstitions which, when he was born, at the end of the eighteenth century were still to be found in nurseries and wigwams. Carlyle's manner of propounding his primitive beliefs was so dictatorial, and so impressive, that people lost the use of their faculties in listening. When once a man has acquired a reputation for depth, every remark he makes will be considered deep.

To convert others, said Carlyle, you must first be converted yourself. He was always supremely certain of the truth of what he was saying. His confidence inspired confidence. To obtain a personal reputation such as that of Carlyle, manner is more potent than matter.

He gave the impression that he had, in the words of a feminine admirer, "Much—very much—in him that was quite unutterable, quite unfit to be uttered to the uninitiated ear." He could say simple and obvious things in such a way that they seemed marvellous revelations. One example of these gilt farthings may suffice. He said of Dr. Francia, "He improved agriculture—not two ears of corn where one only grew, but two harvests of corn, as we have seen!" That sounds tremendous, until one reflects that two ears for one gives the same quantity of corn as two harvests for one. He spoke without thinking, and was listened to without thinking.

Opinions expressed about a famous man before he became famous may have in them some sober truth. When Carlyle was still unknown, Dr. Chalmers, as we have noted, remarked that his young friend was "more in love with earnestness than with truth." In 1837 one of the audience at his first lecture described Carlyle as "noble, wild, and chaotic." These two judgments describe with precision the man who became later a sort of divinity.

Though some of his contemporaries ranked Carlyle high among the world's philosophers and thinkers, the verdict was far from unanimous. Even in the days of his predominance he was criticised severely by men who were entitled to be heard. Tyndall went to him for nourishment, but others joined Huxley, taking Carlyle as a bitter

tonic. The movement has been on the side of Huxley. The general opinion now is that Carlyle's office was that of a stimulant, not a food ; that he was an artist of extraordinary gifts, not a thinker.

His equipment consisted of two things—the dramatic speech of his father, the religion of his mother. He applied the one to the other and conquered the world.

The character he obtained as a moral teacher is one of the perversities of reputation ; for he thought, and taught, that physical force is proof of moral worth. " Sugar Islands, Spice Islands, Indias, Canadas—these, by the real decree of Heaven, were ours ; and nobody would or could believe it, till it was tried by cannon law, and *so* proved."

He was a moral teacher who knew nothing of moral force.

His views on Labour have been strangely misinterpreted. " More truly than Ruskin," says a modern admirer, " is Carlyle the parent of British Socialism and the forerunner of the Labour movement."[1] According to a disciple of Karl Marx, " Almost all English Socialists have received their first decisive impetus towards Socialism from the writings of Carlyle, Mill, Ruskin, Henry George."[2]

And yet what Carlyle desired was a Government with an aristocratic landowner at the head, endowed with absolute power. There would be no elections, no Parliament, no free press, no trade unions, no strikes, no doles. Labour would be drilled in regiments, and compelled to work on pain of flogging, and even death. In prisons the treadmill, and the spirit of the treadmill, would be reintroduced. Carlyle's great complaint was that the few enlightened persons declined the task, for which they had been created, of driving and chastising the " damned race " of mankind. Hence the desperate condition-of-England question.

Ignoring all this, Labour claims him as a champion because, when he was himself poor, he spoke in moving terms of the sorrows of the class to which he belonged.

[1] *Thomas Carlyle*, Mary Agnes Hamilton, 1926.
[2] *My Years of Exile*, Bernstein, 1920.

If he had been appointed dictator, he would have been a hard despot, who could easily be softened by a personal appeal on behalf of an unfortunate individual. His system would have been severity varied by favouritism.

Socialists point to his attacks on *laissez-faire*.

Communists remember his approval of the September massacres and the Terror.

He prophesied freely and confidently. He foresaw bloody revolution, when he was a young man, and—except during the period of correspondence with Goethe—continued to declare that it was just coming.

As a political teacher he has been ignored. We have not gone back to the feudal system; we have not re-introduced slavery, either of blacks or whites; we have not reduced Parliament to the rôle of an advisory council to the Crown, without executive power; we have not chosen from the landed aristocracy a dictator, with assistant despots of the Front-de-Bœuf type.

On the other hand, the political franchise, which he condemned altogether, has been made universal. The trades union regulation of work is precisely opposite to the governing and drilling of labour by employers which he desired. The doles to the unemployed, which he denounced, have reached a total which he would have regarded with dismay.

Freedom of the press continues. Public opinion is not ignored. Instead of the drastic coercion which Carlyle desired to visit upon Ireland—"a hearty horse-whip over that back of yours"—we have given Ireland her freedom. We have not accepted Carlyle's opinion that international treaties are "shadows," "diplomatic packthread," "sheep-skin"; nor do we suppose, as he did, that honour and honesty are "punctilious." We have not been converted to his view that necessity knows no law, nor do we decline, with him, to consider what is morally right. In spite of Carlyle, we still believe that reticence which is designed to deceive is dissimulation.

The bitterness in Carlyle has been ascribed to physical disorders, and to the querulousness of old age. But his

medical brother declared that Scotland never sent forth a sounder man. When Carlyle was eighteen, before he had found excuses for ill-manners in ill-health, a friend told him he was "peevish and splenetic." At the same period he was crying out, "Oh Fortune! Grant me that I may attain to literary fame, and though starvation be my lot I will smile that I have not been born a King." To Jane Welsh he said, a few years later, "Either I shall escape from this 'obscure sojourn,' or perish." It was rage at his obscurity that made Carlyle begin already in his youth to denounce his fellow creatures. His digestion improved when people began to take notice of him, but by that time the habit of speaking of "the whole infernal caudle of things" had become an ingrained mannerism.

Some of his expressions will long be remembered: "Sea-green," applied first to Johnson, then to Robespierre; the "unspeakable Turk"; men are "mostly fools"; political economy is a "dismal science"; "captains of industry"; "eternal verities"; the "cash-nexus"; the "Everlasting Yea."

If he disturbed the equanimity of some of his contemporaries, was that a service of any great magnitude? No doubt some people thought too highly of themselves and of their epoch; but, on the whole, it may be questioned whether the Victorians realised how great they were. They set in motion forces which have made the last hundred years the most remarkable century in the history of mankind. There were conceited and blatant people among them, but one does not regard with reverence the man whose ideas are mere reactions against the follies of the foolish. When Carlyle's reverberating tones were heard booming through the land, some of the more emotional of his hearers fell on their knees and crossed themselves, but the working majority proceeded on their way, as Goethe enjoined, "with cheerfulness and ease."

His diatribes against the smug and self-satisfied may please those who rejoice to see other people being beaten. Carlyle is too often sought for self-laudation rather than for self-examination. As Emerson said, "Each reader,

I suppose, feels complimented by the confidences with which he is honoured by this free-tongued, masterful Hermes. This humour of telling the story in a gale—bantering, scoffing, at the hero, at the enemy, at the learned reporters—is a perpetual flattery to the admiring student—the author abusing the whole world as mad dunces—all but you and I, reader!"[1]

A preacher can draw crowds to his church, a dramatist to his theatre, by startling his audience with denunciations of the sins and follies common to mankind, which few listeners suppose that they themselves have committed, each one assuming that his neighbour is being pointed at, not himself.

Carlyle denounced those who desired happiness, and yet he sought it persistently, and reported to his friends his successes and failures in the chase. Here, as so often with Carlyle, we have to disentangle the man from his coverings. He had been taught that happiness is irreverent to God; therefore he declaimed against the impious beings who unabashedly desired it. But he could not abstain from speaking and thinking about it; and, on the whole, he must be regarded as a man who obtained at least the average share of happiness. During the visit to Edinburgh for the Rectorial Address, it was evident to those who were with him that he was enjoying himself. "It was a time of joy and gladness, which he amply shared," said Tyndall, adding that when Carlyle spoke of it afterwards as "a miserable time" he must have been "the victim of self-delusion." "He was not as unhappy as he thought himself," said Masson, who spoke of "his power of being actually happy himself and of making others happy."

When Sir William Harcourt, in his youth, asked Carlyle how it was that the Papacy, a Lie, had survived so long, the reply he received was that he thought himself clever, but he would certainly be consigned to everlasting tortures. When a judge asked him for a definition of justice, Carlyle could again do nothing but threaten; either the judge

[1] *Correspondence of Carlyle and Emerson*, II., 294.

would find out what justice was or he also would undergo the boiling oil treatment. Lord John Manners went with some friends to seek from Carlyle practical advice on political questions. The answer they received was, as Carlyle himself related with glee, "All I knew was, I told them, that they must be doing something ere long, or they would find themselves on the road to the devil," and he laughed as if he would rend the roof.[1] An American girl sought Carlyle as an oracle, and was laughed at for her pains. There is some excuse for the comment of Henry James, who writes of Carlyle's "undevout soul, as shown when he made fun of the young New England woman, and the earnest, devout homage her credulous soul had rendered him."

It was his religion that made Carlyle send people away snubbed and disheartened. He warned men that God smites those who neglect His behests. He himself would not venture to interpret the monitions of the Deity, lest he should be chastised for his presumption. His cautious Scotch nature made him avoid offering solutions which might prove erroneous, and be quoted against him. Moreover, his religion taught him to confine himself to his own salvation, and leave the rest of mankind to its fate. Egotism and Calvinism were dominant in Carlyle.

He was also a brother, a sympathetic, feeling fellow man. "The great soul of the world is just," he said. Rewards and punishments are meted out. Each man has to align himself with the tendency of things. He must make the best of himself, without forgetting his duty to society. There is no room for sentimentality, which is an attempt to save wrongdoers from the fate that is their due.

There are people who pass through life without any clear consciousness of their existence. To them Carlyle shouted, in a voice that startled them, "Understand that you are alive and that God is alive." The wages of sin is death. This is the great "Law of Fact"; we forget it at our peril. Many of his hearers were encouraged by

[1] *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1881, "Some Personal Recollections of Carlyle," by Henry James.

his exhortations to do honest work, to justify their creation.

But the danger of Carlyle's influence is that, while the reader is being stimulated to worthy conduct, he may at the same time become inoculated with *Schadenfreude*, jealousy, and egotism ; that, though he imagines he is being led along exalted paths, he may be unconsciously absorbing the conviction that immediate success is the sole test of merit ; that he may be encouraged in idolatrous practices, which are a form of self-laudation ; and may learn to regard men as Carlyle did, with " abhorrence mingled with pity."

When all this has been taken into account, and we remember Carlyle's share of responsibility for the events of 1914–18, the question arises whether the balance is on the right side ; whether, in spite of the nobility of much that he wrote, Carlyle may not, on the whole, have done more harm than good.

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